FAA Selects Boeing to Demonstrate Concepts for Heightened Security in Air Traffic System

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today announced it has selected Boeing for a $23 million contract to evaluate the feasibility of integrating emerging security- and capacity-enhancing technologies into the current National Airspace System. Leading the effort will be Boeing Air Traffic Management (ATM). The concepts to be studied include a global satellite-based architecture, a highly integrated and secure information network, and secure, broadband two-way communications capability.

These enhancements would increase common situational awareness across the entire airspace system and, based on the availability of better information, improve collaborative decision-making in response to threats or other non-normal events. The enhancements would facilitate better tactical and strategic decisions concerning use of the nation's air space.

"We are eager to help the FAA in every way we can to further secure our nation's air transportation system," said John Hayhurst, ATM president. "The events of September 11 created new security imperatives for air travel. At the same time, we knew that the advanced concepts we were developing to help the air traffic system cope with a healthy, growing demand for air travel would also inherently strengthen safety and security," he said.

According to Hayhurst, the company is dedicating significant internal resources to supplement this effort. Hayhurst said that this enables ATM to leverage existing company assets and expertise that will support innovative approaches to meeting the nation's aviation needs. For example, the team will have access to companywide laboratory facilities and advanced capabilities in modeling and simulation, and will draw on the tools and test facilities of Boeing subsidiaries Autometric and Preston Aviation Solutions.

ATM will apply end-to-end system analysis tools, models and simulations to evaluate the proposed system architecture. Proof-of-concept demonstrations will be conducted using an existing networked laboratory infrastructure and Connexion One, a unique, satellite communications-equipped 737-400 research and test aircraft. In addition, Connexion by Boeing^{SM}, which is a member of the core team, also is providing the airborne and ground-based infrastructure that supports secure two-way satellite broadband communications between the aircraft and a secure information network.

The demonstrations will:

- Integrate a common information network with air traffic management functions (communication, navigation and surveillance) to substantiate the ability to maintain real-time and continuous situational awareness, demonstrate the feasibility of a secure communications system and validate aircraft monitoring and data transmission capabilities.
- Build on the previous demonstration to create a smoother, seamless transition between oceanic and domestic air traffic control domains while maintaining safety.
- Explore a solution for monitoring aircraft on the ground that is integrated with existing airport security systems.

"Boeing commends the FAA Administrator Jane Garvey and Senator Patty Murray for their commitment to making sure that the air transportation infrastructure receives the resources required to make the airspace system even more safe and efficient," said Hayhurst.

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For further information:
Tim Neale
Boeing Air Traffic Management (Wa. DC)
703-584-2700
Debbie Nomaguchi
Boeing Air Traffic Management (Seattle)
425-373-2780
Terrance Scott
Connexion by Boeing (Seattle)
206-655-9350