First Boeing 747-400ER Freighter Comes Together in Everett Factory

The forward section of the first Boeing 747-400ER (extended range) Freighter has been loaded into an assembly tool in the Everett, Wash., factory -- where it will be joined with the airplane's two other major fuselage sections. After the "final body join," the new airplane will be in one piece for the first time.

"It arrived in three huge sections and it will leave as one beautiful airplane," said Kurt Kraft, 747-400ER program manager.

The airplane, the 1,315th 747 to be assembled, will roll out in September and -- following flight test and certification -- deliver to launch customer International Lease Finance Corporation in October. The airplane will be leased to and operated by Air France.

Boeing [NYSE: BA] 747 freighters form the backbone of the world's air cargo system. By themselves, 747s carry nearly half of all the world's air cargo.

The 747-400ER will include greater range or more payload, a choice customers make to best fit their operations. To support this enhanced capability, the new 747-400ER Freighter and passenger versions have increased their gross takeoff weight by 35,000 pounds (15,870 kilograms) to 910,000 pounds (412,770 kilograms).

The first 747-400ER passenger airplane is currently being flight-tested and is scheduled to enter service with launch customer Qantas Airways in October.

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