

Bair Provides Update on Boeing 7E7 Dreamliner

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-- Airframe Candidates Announced -- Customer Interest Strong -- Environmental Performance Highlighted

Mike Bair, senior vice president of the Boeing 7E7 program, said today that the company is making excellent progress on the development of the 7E7 and continues to be on track to seek authority to offer the airplane later this year.

During a presentation at the Paris Air Show today, Bair announced the airframe candidate companies that have been selected to participate in the design and manufacture of large subassemblies.

Alenia Aeronautica, Fuji Heavy Industries, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Vought Aircraft Industries have been selected as external candidates. In addition, several Boeing sites will be participating at this level.

"We are not at a point where we can say specifically what parts or what percentage of the airplane will be awarded to any company," Bair emphasized. "Our talks are ongoing. However, these companies have distinguished themselves as the candidates for receiving design-and-build work for the 7E7 airframe."

Bair noted that other companies that participated in the materials technology development effort will likely become suppliers to the program by working with one or more of the main team members.

"We have clearly stated that we expect to have direct relationships with fewer companies working on the design and build of large sections of the airplane," Bair said. "This decision in no way reflects poorly on the companies who were on the technology development team but were not selected. We are encouraging the airframe candidates to consider teaming with them for 7E7 work."

Bair said the decision on the candidates is another step forward for the 7E7 program.

In addition to working with the airframe team and its recently announced systems technology development team, Boeing continues to meet with airlines to discuss the 7E7.

"We are talking with more than 40 airlines from around the world," Bair said. "The efficiency of this airplane -- using 20 percent less fuel per passenger than today's airplanes -- is really appealing to them. The flexibility of the airplane to fit different business scenarios is important to them, and we have had a lot of conversation about that in the past few months. The airlines also like the improved flying experience the 7E7 will provide to their customers."

Boeing is looking at two family members for the 7E7: a basic version that seats about 200 passengers in a tri-class configuration and a stretch version that would accommodate up to 250 passengers in tri-class seating. The 7E7 will have a range of 7,200 to 8,000 nautical miles (13,300 to 14,800 kilometers). As with current airplanes, some customers may opt to use the airplanes in more dense seating configurations for shorter-range missions. The stretch version could be configured for as many as 400 passengers in single-class seating.

Among the improvements being developed for passengers are wider aisles, lower cabin altitude and increased cabin humidity. In addition, the 7E7 will be e-enabled, with systems that provide in-flight entertainment and Internet access, real-time airplane systems and structure health monitoring, and crew connectivity.

The 7E7 will be the first airplane to bring long-range capabilities to a mid-sized airplane. This will allow airlines to provide non-stop service on routes that require long range but don't justify larger-sized airplanes.

"We know that people prefer to fly directly to their destination," Bair said. "The 7E7 will let more people do that. We estimate that there are more than 400 city pairs that could be served non-stop efficiently for the first time with the 7E7."

For example, airlines could provide service on the following non-stop routes: Atlanta-Athens, Newark-Rio de Janeiro, Vancouver-Munich, Washington, D.C.-Rome, San Francisco-Milan, Helsinki-Shanghai, Paris-Minneapolis, Dubai-Taipei, London-Fukuoka, Munich-Singapore.

Another aspect of the 7E7 that pleases airlines is its environmental performance.

"With every new airplane we continue to find better ways of reducing our impact on the environment," Bair said. "We do this very purposefully. We look for ways to make our airplanes cleaner and quieter -- better in every way."

The 7E7 will have the best fuel efficiency of any wide-body aircraft and have the smallest sound "footprint," with the quietest takeoffs and landings in its class.

"We still have a lot to get done as we move toward authority to offer the 7E7 to our customers," Bair said. "The team is making great progress on all fronts -- understanding what our customers want, developing an airplane that meets their needs, and defining a business case that will demonstrate the value of the program.

"We are making our decisions in a disciplined fashion and we are taking them one at a time to make sure we have the right information to make the right choices," Bair said.

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