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The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] today confirmed that AirTran Airways has finalized an agreement for up to 110 Boeing 737 and 717 airplanes.

The Orlando, Fla.-based airline will add the 737 to its fleet with an order for 28 airplanes and options for 50 more. It's also leasing additional 737s. In addition, the airline, which already operates the 717, will augment its fleet with up to 10 717s.

"Building on our long-standing partnership with Boeing, this order ensures that AirTran Airways is poised to move into the next stage as one of the country's major carriers," said Joe Leonard, AirTran Airways' chairman and chief executive officer.

Although AirTran Airways will initially receive the 737-700, it could substitute other 737 models in the future.

"The Boeing 737 is a phenomenal airplane. We're confident that these new aircraft will produce consistent operating results, building on the efficiency and reliability of our 717 fleet, thus reducing our costs and allowing us to pass the savings on to our customers," Leonard added.

Alan Mulally, president and chief executive officer of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, said he is pleased that AirTran Airways has chosen to build on the tremendous success of its 717 service by adding the larger, longer-range 737.

"We've had a great relationship with AirTran Airways since it launched the 717, and we look forward to supporting its expansion into medium- and longer-haul markets with the 737," Mulally said. "The reliability, performance and operating economics of these two airplanes are a perfect fit as the airline moves into the future."

The digitally designed 737-600s/-700s/-800s/-900s are the newest and most technologically advanced airplanes in the single-aisle market. Outfitted with a new wing and more powerful engines, they can fly higher, faster and farther than their competitor. In addition, their flight decks feature the latest liquid-crystal flat-panel displays and accommodate new communications and flight-management capabilities that promise to reduce flight delays and enhance flight-crew efficiency.

The Boeing 737 aircraft will be powered by CFM56-7B engines produced by CFM International, a 50/50 joint company between Snecma Moteurs of France and General Electric Company. The environmentally friendly CFM56 engines meet all current (Stage 3) and planned (Stage 4) noise restrictions with significant margin and provide exceptionally low emissions levels. The engines are also among the most reliable flying today with 99.97 percent departure reliability.

Since its inception, 215 airlines have purchased more than 5,200 737s, making it the best-selling commercial airplane in history.

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