Boeing 7E7 Dreamliner Progress Continues

From the airplane design to the business case, progress is strong on all fronts of the 7E7 program. Mike Bair, senior vice president of the 7E7 program, said the team of Boeing [NYSE: BA] employees and suppliers is meeting the high expectations required to meet the program objectives.

The design of the 7E7 family of airplanes has been refined over the past three months and new clarity reached in the definition of the capabilities of the two prime family members, the baseline 7E7 and a 7E7 Stretch.

The baseline 7E7, at a length of 186 feet (56.7 m) will carry about 200 passengers in three classes of seating on routes as long as 6,600 nautical miles (12,200 km).

With an increased length of 202 feet (61.6 m), the 7E7 Stretch will accommodate 250 passengers in three-class seating. Its range capability will be 8,000 nautical miles.

"These two airplanes create a dynamic family that is very interesting to the airlines of the world," Bair said. "We are now working with more than 50 airlines. We meet with them to understand their requirements and share our progress."

In addition to the decreased operating costs associated with the 7E7 because of its more fuel efficient performance, increased revenue potential from cargo capability is drawing customer interest.

The baseline 7E7, with room for five pallets of cargo and five standard LD-3 containers, has 57 percent more cargo space as compared to the A300-600, the Airbus product of roughly the same size. With room for six pallets of cargo and eight LD-3 containers, the 7E7 Stretch has 44 percent more cargo space than the A330-200.

"Cargo is an important part of the revenue stream for airlines," Bair explained. "The cargo market is growing faster than the passenger market and it tends to be more consistent during difficult times."

The Boeing 7E7 is scheduled to enter revenue service in 2008.

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