Boeing 7E7 Will Use Air Transport for Component Delivery

Boeing [NYSE:BA] will dramatically reduce the time to move components of its new 7E7 passenger plane to final assembly from suppliers by adopting air transportation as its primary method of parts delivery.

The company projects possible savings of 20 to 40 percent compared to traditional shipping methods, with delivery times of as little as one day, rather than as many as 30 days for other programs today.

Such savings will allow the initial 7E7 investment in the air transportation assets to be recouped in the first few years of production.

"Transporting large pieces by air will allow us to dramatically reduce flow time," said Mike Bair, senior vice president of the 7E7 program. "We're committed to doing things differently to create value for our customers."

Boeing will rely on at least three modified 747-400s to move the 7E7 components, although it has not determined details such as asset ownership or where the 747s will be modified.

"We announced in June that the 7E7 will be the first large commercial jet to have a majority of its primary structure -- including the wing and fuselage -- made of composite materials," Bair said. "That allows us to build larger, more integrated assemblies that will come from all over the world. Regardless of where the final assembly site is, air transport is a perfect solution."

The decision to transport large 7E7 assemblies by air does not alter the requirement for the 7E7 final assembly site to be accessible by water. Boeing plans to select the 7E7 final assembly location later this year.

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