Boeing Completes Major Milestone for Project Wedgetail

Boeing [NYSE: BA] has achieved a significant milestone for Project Wedgetail, Australia's airborne early warning and control program, by successfully installing and testing the power distribution system on the first 737-AEW&C platform ahead of schedule. This is a major step in the modification effort leading to the first airworthiness flight of the aircraft scheduled for spring 2004.

Crews completed tests of the aircraft's Electrical Power Generating System (EPGS), using electricity supplied by ground power units The EPGS distributes and controls power on board the Wedgetail platform to all aircraft and mission systems including: radar, navigation, communications, mission computers, displays and the flight deck.

During initial ground testing the power is supplied externally, but when the 737 AEW&C aircraft is operational, specialized generators attached to the two engines will provide electricity.

"Power-on demonstrates how effective the design and manufacturing integration has worked using digital tools and processes," said Patrick Gill, vice president, 737 AEW&C programs, for Boeing. "It was a complete success thanks to the hard work, energy and experience of the Boeing team in Seattle."

Air Vice Marshal Norman Gray, head of Australia's Airborne Surveillance and Control Division, is pleased with the progress the Wedgetail project has achieved to date.

"This milestone is well ahead of the contracted schedule and shows what can be achieved through the Boeing and the Commonwealth teams operating in partnership."

The first Wedgetail aircraft will be used for the airworthiness flight test program, while the second aircraft, also undergoing modifications in Seattle, will be used to test the airborne mission system beginning in 2004.

Over the next several months, test equipment will be installed along with the radar system equipment.

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