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Boeing [NYSE: BA], Air France and International Lease Finance Corp. (ILFC) celebrated the delivery today of the first Boeing 777-300ER (Extended Range) airplane, the newest member of the market-leading 777 commercial airplane family.

The new airplane is the first of 16 777-300ERs that Air France will receive (through direct purchases and leases) through 2006 and the first of 18 that ILFC has ordered. ILFC is currently Boeing's largest 777-300ER customer. The new 777 airplanes will join Air France's current fleet of 25 777-200ERs.

"This is a tremendous day for Boeing, Air France and ILFC," said Toby Bright, executive vice president, Sales -- Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "These are visionary customers who recognize the impressive benefits of the 777-300ER -- an airplane that has exceeded its original performance guarantees."

"The 777-300ER will be a key element in the development of our existing 777 fleet," said Pierre Vellay, vice president, New Aircraft and Corporate Fleet Planning -- Air France.

The 777-300ER is the first of two new Longer-Range 777 models. The 777-300ER and the 777-200LR (Longer Range) were launched in February 2000 at the request of airline customers seeking airplanes with additional flexibility to serve the non-stop routes that passengers demand.

The twin-engine 777-300ER carries 365 passengers up to 7,705 nautical miles (14,270 kilometers), and is capable of serving such routes as Paris-Los Angeles and Paris-Tokyo.

During the 777-300ER's 1,500-hour flight test program, the airplane exceeded its original design performance targets. As a result, the new jetliner provides increased payload and range capability over those promised to customers at the time of the airplane sale.

Also resulting from the flight-test program, Boeing decided in December 2003 to offer the airplane with higher range and payload capability than originally planned. This enhanced capability will be available for newly delivered airplanes and as a retrofit option starting in the fourth quarter of 2004.

"The operational capabilities of the 777-300ER provide important profitability potential for airlines," said Steven Udvar-Hazy, chairman and CEO -- ILFC. "The airplane has good market acceptance and we expect that the 777-300ER will prove to have a broad customer base in the long future."

Boeing has received orders for 71 777-300ERs from seven customers.

"The 777-300ER provides an excellent combination of range and payload capability with the efficiency, comfort and economics that have become associated with the 777 family," said Lars Andersen, Longer-Range 777 program manager -- Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "This is the most technologically advanced airplane in the industry."

The 777-300ER has updated avionic, electrical, flight and environmental control systems. The airplane's raked wingtips offer fuel efficiency improvements and its semi-levered landing gear permits takeoffs on shorter runways.

The 777-300ER also features the award-winning Boeing Signature Interior, known for its ambient lighting and easily accessible drop-down luggage bins. The Boeing Signature Interior is preferred by customers worldwide and will provide Air France passengers the kind of space and comfort they expect.

General Electric Aircraft Engines [NYSE: GE] manufactures the engines for both Longer-Range 777 models. The GE90-115B turbofan is the world's largest and most powerful commercial jet engine, producing 115,000 pounds of thrust, currently a Guinness World Record.

Following on the success of the 777-300ER, the design of the 777-200LR -- the world's longest range jetliner -- is currently 75 percent complete. The first 777-200LR is scheduled to enter production in October and deliver during the first quarter of 2006.

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