Boeing Begins Major Assembly of World's Longest-Range Jetliner

Boeing [NYSE:BA] mechanics today began assembling the first 777-200LR (Longer Range) passenger airplane, which will fly farther than any commercial jetliner.

The world's longest-range passenger airplane, the 777-200LR can carry 301 passengers up to 9,420 nautical miles (17,446 kilometers), and is capable of serving routes such as London-Sydney and New York-Singapore with a full passenger payload.

"The 777-200LR adds even more capability and value to the technologically advanced 777 family of airplanes," said Lars Andersen, Longer-Range 777 program manager. "Offering nonstop service practically anywhere in the world, it will fly more passengers and more cargo farther than any other commercial jetliner."

Workers took the first step in the major assembly process for the new 777 model by loading its 97-foot-long wing spar into a tool that automatically drills, measures and installs more than 5,000 fasteners into the spar. The spar is the internal support structure that runs the full length of the wings and provides support to the wing.

The first 777-200LR is scheduled to roll out of the factory in February, and begin flight-testing in March. First delivery is scheduled during the first quarter of 2006.

The twin-engine 777-200LR will be powered by the General Electric [NYSE:GE] GE90-110B, based on the world's highest-thrust commercial jet engine.

The 777 family of airplanes has captured 65 percent of its market since launch, with more than 30 customers worldwide having ordered more than 640 airplanes. The Longer-Range 777s -- 777-300ER (Extended Range) and 777-200LR -- have accumulated 81 orders from eight customers worldwide. Pakistan International Airlines and EVA Air are the first customers for the 777-200LR.

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