Boeing 777-200LR, World's Longest-Range Airplane, Makes First Flight

The first Boeing [NYSE:BA] 777-200LR Worldliner, the world's longest range commercial airplane, today completed its first flight and began a test program that will lead to its first delivery in January 2006.

The newest 777 took off from Everett, Wash., Paine Field at 10 a.m. local time. After approximately three hours, it landed at 1:02 p.m. at Seattle's Boeing Field.

Capts. Suzanna Darcy-Hennemann and Frank Santoni flew the airplane, which carries the distinctive new blue Boeing livery. Darcy-Hennemann is the 777-200LR project pilot and Santoni is the chief 777 program pilot for Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

"The 777-200LR's ability to connect the world is amazing," Darcy-Hennemann said. "Flying the first flight is an honor and a rare opportunity."

The 777-200LR, capable of connecting virtually any two cities in the world nonstop, is the fifth 777 model. It can carry 301 passengers up to 9,420 nautical miles (17,445 kilometers).

During today's flight, Darcy-Hennemann and Santoni took the airplane to an altitude of 15,000 feet (4,572 meters) and an air speed of 270 knots, or about 310 miles (500 kilometers) per hour, customary on a first flight. Typically, the 777's cruise altitude is 35,000 feet (10,668 meters), and its cruise speed is Mach 0.84, about 484 miles (779 kilometers) per hour.

Darcy-Hennemann and Santoni tested some of the airplane's systems and structures, as on-board equipment recorded and transmitted real-time data to a flight-test team at Boeing Field.

The flight-test program will involve the airplane flown today and a second one that's being built. Those will prove the airplane's safety, reliability and service-ready condition during 500 flight hours and 300 ground test hours.

"We expect the 777-200LR to perform splendidly during flight test," said Lars Andersen, vice president - program manager, 777 program, Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "This airplane will carry 20 more passengers, offer 12 percent more revenue cargo volume, consume 25 percent less fuel per seat, and fly 600 nautical miles farther than the competition, the A340-500."

Certification by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and Europe's Joint Aviation Authority is expected during the fourth quarter. The first 777-200LR Worldliner is to be delivered to Pakistan International Airlines. EVA Airways is also a launch customer.

Both the 777-200LR and 777-300ER (Extended Range) were launched in February 2002 by Boeing and GE Aircraft Engines at the request of airlines that wanted an airplane with additional flexibility to serve the nonstop routes passengers demand.

GE Aircraft Engines makes the 777-200LR Worldliner's engines.

The 777 family has captured over 60 percent of the market since the airplane's October 1990 launch. More than 38 customers worldwide have ordered more than 680 777s, including 112 Longer-Range 777s (777-300ERs and 777-200LRs). So far, two customers have ordered five 777-200LRs.

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For further information:
Marc Birtel
office: 425-294-6105
mobile: 206-390-4115