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Boeing [NYSE: BA] and ANA (All Nippon Airways) today celebrated delivery of the airline's first Boeing 737-700 airplane, the first of 45 737-700 airplanes ordered by the airline in 2003 and the first Next-Generation 737 to be delivered to Japan.

ANA's first Next-Generation 737 will carry between 118 and 136 passengers depending on the configuration, and features ANA's brand-new seats, which recently received a Japanese Good Design award. The airplanes will be operated on ANA's domestic and short-haul Asian networks.

"This begins the simplification of our narrow-body fleet," said Mineo Yamamoto, President and CEO of ANA. "We look forward to reducing operating costs in this time of high fuel prices with the Next-Generation 737's superior cost efficiencies and performance. Additionally, our passengers will enjoy our new award-winning seats in the 737-700's comfortable interior."

ANA's new ergonomic, slimmer and lighter seats were introduced last month on ANA's Boeing 767-300 fleet, and are being incorporated in all ANA aircraft. Without increasing seat pitch, the new design increases passenger leg room by moving the magazine pocket from knee level to occupy space behind the tray table. To further enhance amenities, a coat hook and stowage pocket have been provided, and the reclining button redesigned for greater ease of use.

In a first for a Japanese airline, a number of the seats also convert into center-row tables allowing the creation of up to 36 Premium Economy Asia seats - a new class for ANA. On domestic routes the 737-700 will fly with an all-Economy configuration of 136 seats. On international routes, up to 36 Premium Economy Asia seats can be created in line with demand, simply by converting 18 seats into center tables.

"This delivery represents another important milestone in our long-term relationship with ANA," said Alan Mulally, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "As we build on more than 50 years of working together, our partnership continues to grow. We believe that the 737's unmatched reliability, performance, operating economics and comfort will contribute to ANA's continued success."

The digitally designed 737-600s/-700s/-800s/-900s are the newest and most technologically advanced airplanes in the single-aisle market. With a new wing and more powerful engines, the new 737s can fly higher, faster and farther than previous models and its competitor. In addition, the new 737's flight deck features the latest liquid-crystal flat-panel displays and is designed to accommodate new communications and flight-management capabilities that promise to reduce flight delays and enhance flight-crew efficiency.

The new airplane is powered by CFM56-7 engines produced by CFMI, a joint venture of General Electric of the United States and Snecma of France, and will be a good neighbor in the community with low noise and low emissions.

Since its inception, airlines have purchased nearly 6,000 737s, making it the best-selling commercial airplane in history. To learn more about the popular single-aisle airplane, visit the 737 Web site.

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