Boeing 747-400 Large Cargo Freighter Taking Shape

Modifications continue on the 747-400s that will transport major components of the Boeing (NYSE: BA) 787 Dreamliner. The distinctive look of the aircraft crystallized late last month with the installation of the "brow," the section just behind the cockpit. The brow, joined to the other enlarged upper fuselage sections, is what makes the freighters ideal for shipping the large composite sections and wings of the Dreamliner. The volume of the Large Cargo Freighter's main deck will be 65,000 cubic feet (1,845m3), three times the cargo by volume as the 747-400 freighter.

Two of the three airplanes that will be converted are undergoing modification at Evergreen Aviation Technologies Corp. in Taiwan. The third will follow later. The freighter will make its first flight this summer and be certified by the end of the year. The first two airplanes begin supporting 787 final assembly in 2007.

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