Air Pacific Becomes Newest Boeing 787 Dreamliner Customer

Boeing reaches 350 orders for 787 family

Air Pacific, the flag carrier of the South Pacific island republic of Fiji, and The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] today announced an order for five Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners , with three additional purchase rights.

With this announcement, total orders for the Boeing 787 family have reached 350 airplanes from 26 customers.

The first of the long-range, high-technology jetliners will be delivered in 2011 and will fly the airline's key routes from Nadi, Fiji, to Australia, New Zealand, North America and Japan. The new Dreamliners will eventually replace two Boeing 747-400s and one 767-300ER. No list price is currently published for the 787-9 model.

The order was included last week on the Boeing Orders & Deliveries Web site, attributed to an unidentified customer. Today's announcement coincides with the second anniversary of Boeing's launch of the 787 program.

"This is a momentous decision for Air Pacific that has taken many months of detailed study and negotiation," said Gerald Barrack, chairman of Air Pacific, Ltd. "I am pleased with the price negotiated and the certainty this decision provides for Air Pacific, for the future of air transport links within the Pacific and particularly for the future growth of Fiji's tourism and export industries."

The contract signing ceremony held today also marks Barrack's retirement from the airline he has led for nearly 20 years.

"We are delighted to have concluded an extensive evaluation and negotiation, and are convinced that the right aircraft has been selected," said John Campbell, Air Pacific managing director and CEO. "The Boeing 787-9 offers significantly decreased operating and maintenance costs, lower fuel consumption and increased passenger comfort, all vital considerations in an aviation world that is intensely competitive and subject to high fuel costs for the foreseeable future."

The 787 will use 20 percent less fuel for comparable operations than similarly sized airplanes, while traveling at speeds similar to today's fastest commercial airplanes, Mach 0.85. The 787-9 is the largest version of the 787 family currently being offered to airlines and will carry 250 to 290 passengers on routes of 8,600 to 8,800 nautical miles (15,900 to 16,300 km).

"As the airline is an all-Boeing operator, Air Pacific and Boeing have enjoyed a great relationship for many years," said Rob Pasterick, vice president and chief financial officer, Boeing Commercial Airplanes, representing the company at the Suva press conference and contract signing ceremony. "Air Pacific is one of the great success stories in South Pacific aviation, having consistently produced profits in the face of tough competition. We are delighted that Air Pacific has selected the 787 after its rigorous evaluation."

Air Pacific has yet to choose between GE Aircraft Engines' GEnx or Rolls-Royce's Trent 1000 powerplants for its new airplanes.

Air Pacific began operations in 1951 and expanded as tourism and export markets grew. The airline was the region's inaugural customer for the Boeing Next-Generation 737 family with an order in 1996, followed by the 1998 delivery of a 737-700 and the 1999 delivery of two 737-800s.

Boeing developed the 787 for the midsized market, which is estimated to be 3,500 airplanes over the next 20 years. As much as 50 percent of the 787's primary structure will be made of advanced composite materials, which allow higher cabin humidity and lower cabin altitude, providing the atmosphere for a great passenger experience. In addition, the 787 will have the largest windows of any airliner.

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The 787 will bring big-jet range and economics to midsized airplanes, with its high-efficiency engines and state-of-the-art design providing unmatched fuel efficiency and exceptional environmental performance.

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For further information:
Bob Saling
Seattle
+1 (206) 766-2914
bob.saling@boeing.com
Ken Morton
Australia
+61(2) 9086-3330

ken.morton@boeing.com
Lori Gunter
Everett
+1 (425) 717-0571
loretta.m.gunter@boeing.com