Major Assembly of First Boeing 787 Dreamliner Starts

Boeing [NYSE: BA] and its partner Fuji Heavy Industries (FHI) today celebrate the start of major assembly for the first 787 Dreamliner. FHI began to assemble the center wing section at its new factory in Handa, Japan, near Nagoya.

"When I look at this piece of structure coming together I know that we are seeing the future of our industry," said Mike Bair, vice president and general manager of the 787 program for Boeing. "We have introduced new materials, new processes, new tools and a new way of working together that is ushering in a new era in commercial aviation."

When it is completed, it will be flown from Japan to Charleston, S.C., where Global Aeronautica will integrate it with other 787 structures before sending it on to Everett, Wash.

Norihisa Matsuo, corporate executive vice president and president of FHI's Aerospace Company, said, "FHI has received extraordinary support from Boeing and other global partners. The start of major assembly is really the result of the effort of the entire team. We are very proud of achieving major assembly start of 787 programs as a milestone as scheduled today."

Scott Strode, vice president of Airplane Development and Production on the 787 program, said, "We at Boeing are so proud to share this day with FHI -- a longtime, valuable partner. You understand our vision and share our commitment to excellence."

Scheduled for delivery beginning in 2008, the Dreamliner provides passengers with a better flying experience and operators with a more efficient commercial jetliner. Because it uses 20 percent less fuel per passenger than similarly sized airplanes, the 787 is designed for the environment with lower emissions and quieter takeoffs and landings. Inside the airplane, passengers will find cleaner air, bigger windows, more stowage space and improved lighting. To date, 28 airlines have logged 403 orders and commitments worth more than $55 billion at current list prices since the 787 launch in April 2004, making the Dreamliner the most successful commercial airplane launch in history.

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