Boeing 737 Design Enhancements Earn FAA Certification

Boeing [NYSE: BA] design enhancements that increase the short-field performance of the Next-Generation 737 earned certification this week from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration following a successful four-month flight-test program. European Aviation Safety Agency certification is expected to follow soon.

"Our ultimate goal is to help our customers succeed by offering them products that add value to their operations," said Mark Jenkins, vice president and general manager of 737 Airplane Production. "The 737's short-field performance enhancements will allow airlines to generate more revenue."

The 737 design enhancements allow operators to fly increased payload in and out of airports with runways less than 5,000 feet long. The design enhancements include a two-position tail skid that enables reduced approach speeds, sealed leading-edge slats that provide increased lift during takeoff, and increased flight spoiler deflection on the ground that improves takeoff and landing performance.

The short-field design package is an option on the 737-600, -700 and -800 and is standard equipment for the new 737-900ER. The enhancements increase payload capability for landing up to 8,000 pounds on the 737-800 and 737-900ER and up to 4,000 pounds on the 737-600 and 737-700. They also increase payload capability for takeoff up to 2,000 pounds on the 737-800 and 737-900ER and up to 400 pounds on the 737-600 and 737-700.

The short-field performance changes were developed starting in 2004. The flight-test program was conducted on a new 737-800 and began when the airplane made its first flight on Jan. 24, 2006.

Boeing will deliver the refurbished test airplane later this week to the launch customer, Brazilian low-cost carrier GOL Linhas Aereas S.A. The jet is the first of 67 737-800s ordered by the carrier.

To date 11 customers have ordered the short-field performance package for more than 250 airplanes. In addition to GOL, Alaska Airlines, Air Europa, Air India, Egyptair, GE Commercial Aviation Services (GECAS), Hapagfly, Japan Airlines, Pegasus Airlines, Sky Airlines and Turkish Airlines are among some of the operators that have ordered the design package.

The Next-Generation 737s are 10 years newer and fly higher, faster and farther than competing models. Through June 2006, 97 customers have placed orders for more than 3,300 Next-Generation 737s; the program has 1,365 unfilled orders with a value of $91 billion at current list prices.

For more information about the 737, visit the Web site.

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