Boeing, Continental Airlines Reach Agreement for 12 737-900ERs

Airline is launch customer in the Americas and the first two-class carrier to order newest Next-Generation 737 family member

Boeing [NYSE: BA] and Continental Airlines today announced that Continental will become the first airline in the Americas and the first two-class carrier to operate Boeing's newest and largest-capacity member of the Next-Generation 737 family, the -900ER.

Continental converted orders for 12 Next-Generation 737s to the new 737-900ER model. Boeing will deliver Continental's first 737-900ER in 2008. Last month Continental Airlines ordered an undisclosed mix of 24 Next-Generation 737s along with 10 787 Dreamliners.

"The 737-900ER will support Continental's growth with the excellent economics, reliability and range of the Next-Generation 737 family and provide greater capacity than the 737-800," said Ray Conner, vice president, Sales, the Americas, Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "The 737-900ER will provide these important enhancements on routes up to 3,200 nautical miles (5,900 km)."

The 737-900ER will have substantial economic advantages over competing models, including 9 percent lower operating costs per trip and 7 percent lower operating costs per seat than the A321 -- which is more than 10,000 pounds (4,536 kg) heavier.

"The superior economics of the 737-900ER build upon the substantial benefits of the 737 Next-Generation family," said Larry Kellner, Continental's chairman and CEO. "The flight crew, maintenance and spare parts commonality this aircraft shares with the rest of the Next-Generation 737 family will help enable us to fly this aircraft at one of the lowest operating costs in our fleet."

Aerodynamic and structural design changes to the 737-900ER include: strengthened wings, a two-position tailskid and enhancements to the leading and trailing-edge flap systems, which provide the 737-900ER higher takeoff weight capability and increased range than the base model. Continental's 737-900ERs will further benefit from optional Blended Winglets, which reduce fuel consumption and engine thrust requirements -- resulting in reduced engine wear and tear, lower takeoff noise and lower fuel emissions.

Launched in July 2005, the 737-900ER joins the 737-600, -700 and -800 airplanes and will share the same industry-leading reliability of the other Next-Generation 737 series models. The Next-Generation 737s are 10 years newer and fly higher, faster and farther than competing models. To date, 99 customers have placed orders for more than 3,300 Next-Generation 737s.
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