Air France Places Milestone Order for Boeing Flight-Deck Technology

In a landmark endorsement of the Boeing [NYSE: BA] strategy to transform the way airlines fly and maintain their jets, Air France will install the Boeing Class 3 Electronic Flight Bag on its entire fleet of 777 airplanes, including 42 currently in service and 13 to be delivered.

The Boeing Class 3 EFB is a computer integrated into an airplane's avionics that is becoming a must-have device for airlines looking to improve both the safety and efficiency of their fleet.

The Air France order represents an endorsement of both the value and capability of Boeing's EFB by one of the world's most respected carriers. Air France is well- situated to evaluate Boeing's EFB: Amsterdam-based KLM, also under the Air France-KLM Group, launched the Boeing EFB on 777s when it ordered the device in 2002. Thirteen of KLM's 18 EFB-equipped 777s have been delivered.

"We have been able to see the value of Boeing's Class 3 EFB up close," said Pierre Caussade, vice president of Flight Operations for Air France. "We're confident that the Class 3 EFB will help us operate a more efficient airline, and we're pleased to have Boeing helping make that happen."

Boeing's EFB has recorded more than 850 total orders since it was introduced for sale in 2002. It has been ordered for Next-Generation 737s, 747s, 757s, 767s, 777s and 787s (the Class 3 EFB comes as standard equipment on the 787).

"When an airline as respected and admired as Air France orders our Electronic Flight Bag, the victory is magnified," said Dan da Silva, vice president of Sales and Marketing for Boeing Commercial Aviation Services. "It validates the Class 3 EFB and what it brings to 777 operators. But even more important, Air France is inviting Boeing to be a partner in its drive to maximize the performance and safety of the airline. We couldn't ask for a better endorsement."

Air France is the eighth Boeing customer in 2006 to announce the adoption of Boeing's Class 3 EFB. Earlier this year, Aeromexico, Air Canada, Singapore Airlines, UPS, SonAir, Etihad Airways and Jet Airways announced they will install Boeing's EFB. Air France is the most significant order from a European carrier for the EFB to date.

Boeing's Class 3 EFB can serve as a critical communications gateway between the airplane in the sky and an airline's operations center and maintenance department on the ground. The EFB has the capability to be an integral part of an information system that helps an airline gather and share information across an entire enterprise.

EFB is a core technology in Boeing's vision of an e-Enabled air-transport system in which data, information and knowledge can be shared easily across an aviation enterprise. It integrates smoothly with a range of other Boeing e-Enabled maintenance and performance products such as Airplane Health Management, Maintenance Performance Toolbox and Integrated Materials Management.

Boeing's EFB also has the capability to run advanced communications systems that improve aviation safety both in the air and on the ground. Applications currently being tested include some that improve the "situational awareness" of pilots by allowing them to follow airplane movements on the ground and in the air on a video screen. Some carriers have successfully tested Boeing's EFB to help reduce fuel consumption and reduce the impact of airplane noise pollution around airports.

"It is the increased capability of the EFB that is really attracting attention," said Boeing's Dave Allen, chief engineer for installation and development of the EFB. "The flight deck of a modern commercial airliner is extremely crowded, and any new device must demonstrate maximum functionality and flexibility before it can muscle its way in."

Using software developed by Boeing and its subsidiary, Jeppesen, the Boeing EFB provides an open-architecture platform that allows the airline to add its own documents or third-party applications. The fact that the Class 3 EFB is integrated with an airplane's avionics allows the tool to be certified for all phases of operation on the ground and in the air.

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