Test Flight Program Advances for Boeing A160 Hummingbird Unmanned Aircraft

The A160 Hummingbird unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) has returned to the skies as The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] resumed test flight operations near Victorville, Calif. on Nov. 8.

A team of test engineers from Boeing and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) put the A160 through its paces in a 45-minute test that included both hover and forward flight.

"The success of this latest flight is a tribute to the hard work of the Boeing and DARPA A160 team," said Jim Martin, Boeing A160 program manager. "This innovative unmanned aerial system continues to prove its versatility through a rigorous flight test program."

This current series of test flights is being conducted using the six-cylinder gasoline engine variant. Engineers will analyze the flight data and determine objectives for subsequent test flights at the same time that work continues in parallel toward the first flight of the turbine-powered A160T next spring.

The A160 Hummingbird has accumulated more than 1,000 ground test hours and 58.5 flight hours during 32 flights. The autonomous UAV is 35 feet long with a 36-foot rotor diameter and will fly up to 140 knots with a ceiling of 25-30,000 ft. (high hover capability up to 15,000 ft.) for up to 20 hours. Operational A160Ts will be capable of performing persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; target acquisition; communication relay and precision re-supply missions.

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