Continental Converts Orders for 12 more Boeing 737-900ERs

Boeing [NYSE: BA] and Continental Airlines today announced that Continental has converted 12 of its existing orders for Next-Generation 737 jetliners to 737-900ERs. Today's announcement follows a Continental decision last August to become the first airline in the Americas and the first two-class carrier to order Boeing's newest and largest-capacity member of the 737 family, the -900ER. With this conversion, Continental now has orders for 24 737-900ER jetliners.

"The 737-900ER is a great fit for Continental's growth plans and we are delighted with this affirmation of its appeal by a world-class airline such as Continental," said Ray Conner, vice president, Sales, the Americas, Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "The 737-900ER's range, reliability and outstanding operating economics will give Continental important advantages on routes up to 3,200 nautical miles (5,900 km)."

"The new 737-900ER will have among the lowest operating costs in the industry and will allow us to build upon our efficient 737 fleet," said Larry Kellner, chairman and chief executive officer of Continental Airlines. "These aircraft are part of our continued focus on fleet modernization, fuel efficiency and delivering the best product in the business."

The 737-900ER offers significant economic improvements over competing models, including lower operating costs per trip and lower operating costs per seat than the A321 -- which is more than 10,000 pounds (4,536 kg) heavier.

The 737-900ER's enhanced performance is attributed to a series of aerodynamic and structural design changes that 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, customers have placed orders for more than 3,500 Next-Generation 737s, 94 of which are 737-900ERs.

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