Boeing 787 Program Ends Year with Celebration of Progress

Customers, partners and employees gathered at the Boeing [NYSE: BA] Everett factory today to celebrate the virtual rollout of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner and the program's progress over the last year.

Mike Bair, vice president and general manager of the 787 program, hosted the event.

"Today's virtual rollout is the culmination of many months of effort by thousands of team members at Boeing and its 787 partners," said Bair. "Through the use of our new digital toolset, provided by Dassault Systemes, the team has proven the ability to manufacture 787 designs."

While the detailed analysis and demonstrations created by the team remain proprietary for competitive reasons, the program did share a number of engineering-based simulations ranging from part installations to the final assembly factory flow in Everett.

"The engineering data behind these simulations gives us confidence in our assembly processes and our ability to meet our commitments to our customers," Bair said. "Our tools have enabled us to model the entire production process from our partners' factories to our own. We have found errors in simulation that would have been costly to find in production and have been able to design corrections quickly to keep the program on track."

For many of the partners, the simulations were paired with footage of actual work on their first test and production parts.

During the ceremony, Bair said that the first production wire bundle had been delivered from Labinal to Korean Air's Aerospace Division for installation in the wing tip being manufactured in Korea.

In addition, the program unveiled the new paint scheme for its 747-400 Large Cargo Freighters and announced that those airplanes will be named "Dreamlifters."

"The Dreamlifter is a vital tool that allows us to create a production flow around the world that is very efficient," said Bair. "We look forward to receiving the second Dreamlifter from EGAT in Taiwan early next month. It will arrive in Seattle already painted and ready to participate in the ongoing flight test program."

Additionally, the program unveiled the Dreamliner Gallery, a new facility in Everett, Wash., that provides 787 airline customers a more streamlined approach to airplane configuration.

"The Gallery provides a single location for airlines to configure their 787s," said Bair. "All catalog selections will be physically present in the Gallery for customers to see, touch and evaluate prior to selection. Previously, this was done at various locations around the world."

Also in preparation for the airplane's entry into service, Boeing is working with ANA and Northwest Airlines on a Service Ready Operational Validation program that will happen at the end of the flight test program and prior to first deliveries. A 787 will be used on actual airline routes, replicating the rigors and demands of commercial service.

"This is similar to the programs we have used with great success on other programs," said Bair. "It is one of the last steps we take to ensure that the airplane, the airlines, and the infrastructure are ready for 787 revenue service."

Bair congratulated the team for a spectacular 2006 and reminded everyone that 2007 is when many of the program's major milestones must be completed.

"We open our Everett factory next year and start producing airplanes," Bair said. "We will have our rollout and first flight and will begin the flight test program. Every year has been important as we move toward starting deliveries in 2008 but next year will be the most demanding experience for many of us.

"This is why we came to work for Boeing," he added, "to create new airplanes that bring new levels of performance to our customers and new levels of comfort and convenience to the passengers of the world.

"It's a challenge, no doubt about it. This is the team, all of us together - our customers, our partners and each of us - who will bring this airplane to life. It's an amazing journey from where we started just four years ago. But the best part is yet to come."

Boeing 787 Dreamliner Program

2006 Major Accomplishments

- All factories begin part production
- Wing test box complete and testing under way

- Major systems laboratories opened and running
- On-time start of major assembly
- Large Cargo Freighter first flight and flight testing
- First production wire bundle shipped
- GoldCare Lifecycle Support Solution offered for service
- 25 percent of systems for airplane No. 1 shipped
- Virtual rollout
- First 787 VIP models sold
- Orders and commitments increase to 458 airplanes from 37 customers

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