Second Boeing Dreamlifter Takes First Flight

The second Boeing [NYSE: BA] 747-400 Dreamlifter completed its first flight earlier today in Taipei. The Dreamlifter is a specially modified 747-400 used to transport the major composite structures of the all-new 787 Dreamliner.

Piloted by Boeing Flight Test Pilots Jerry Whites and Gary Meiser, the Dreamlifter took off from Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport at 10:34 a.m. and flew for three hours and eight minutes. The airplane -- already wearing the distinctive white and blue livery of the Dreamlifter fleet -- handled well during the routine flight.

This Dreamlifter is expected in Washington State within the next few weeks. The first of the unique fleet arrived in September 2006.

Evergreen Aviation Technologies Corp., part of Taiwan's Evergreen Group, is modifying the fleet of three airplanes at its facility at the airport. The first Dreamlifter delivered the first 787 major assemblies from Nagoya, Japan, to Charleston, S.C., last month.

After several delays late last year, the Dreamlifter's flight test program is proceeding well, with certification from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration expected over the next few months. Already the Dreamlifter has completed more than 1,000 hours of flight and ground testing combined.

"The delays we experienced earlier in the flight test program will not impact our overall 787 schedule," said Scott Strode, vice president of Airplane Definition and Production for the 787 program. "The entire global logistics system, including the Dreamlifter's mobile tail support and cargo loader, is working extremely well."

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