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The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] successfully completed a 12-hour test flight of its A160T Hummingbird unmanned rotorcraft on Oct. 12, recording the aircraft's longest flight to date.

The A160T took off at 6:27 a.m. Pacific near Victorville, Calif., and landed 12.1 hours later at 6:32 p.m. The aircraft carried a 500-pound payload at an altitude of 5,000 feet, simulating a multi-sensor operational mission. The flight used less than 60 percent of the aircraft's maximum fuel, demonstrating the advantages of the A160's design, including its unique optimum speed rotor. The 12-hour flight followed an eight-hour flight on Sept. 27 during which the Hummingbird carried a 1,000-pound payload module.

Ultimately, Boeing plans to fly the aircraft for 18 consecutive hours with a 300-pound payload. The turbine-powered A160T features unmatched range, endurance, payload and altitude for an unmanned rotorcraft.

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For further information:

Chris Haddox

Advanced Systems

The Boeing Company

(314) 234-6447

chris.d.haddox@boeing.com
