Boeing-led Poseidon Team Begins Production of First P-8A Fuselage

Boeing [NYSE: BA] and its Poseidon industry team yesterday celebrated the start of P-8A fuselage production at Spirit AeroSystems' Wichita, Kan., facility. During a ceremony that also included U.S. Navy personnel, Spirit employees loaded the first P-8A fuselage components into a holding fixture on the factory floor.

The initial parts and other fuselage assemblies eventually will come together on Spirit's existing Next-Generation 737 production line. In early 2008, Spirit will ship the first P-8A fuselage to Boeing Commercial Airplanes in Renton, Wash., for aircraft assembly.

"We've transitioned from designing to building the first P-8A Poseidon for the U.S. Navy, so this is an important day for the program," said Bob Feldmann, Boeing vice president and P-8A program manager. "Just as significant, this event demonstrates the tremendous leverage our program derives from the in-line production approach used on the P-8A and the outstanding working-together partnership between Boeing and Spirit."

"The P-8A fuselage sections will be built using our standard processes, which in the end means lower costs and shorter flow-times," said Buck Buchanan, Spirit AeroSystems vice president/general manager, Fuselage Structures and Systems. "Spirit employees know how important this program is to the Navy, and we are excited to be part of an outstanding team tasked with building the P-8A."

"Spirit's excellent, on-time performance preparing to build the fuselage combined with our 'one-team' approach supports commitments we made to Boeing Integrated Defense Systems and its U.S. Navy customer," said Mo Yahyavi, Boeing vice president and general manager of the Commercial Airplanes P-8A team.

Boeing's industry team is currently performing the program's System Development and Demonstration phase, which includes building five test vehicles: three flight-test and two ground-test aircraft. The first test aircraft will be delivered to the Navy and fly in 2009.

The Navy plans to purchase 108 P-8As to replace its fleet of P-3C aircraft. Initial operational capability is slated for 2013. The Boeing-led Poseidon industry team includes CFM International, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, Spirit AeroSystems and GE Aviation.

The P-8A is a long-range anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations. A derivative of the Next-Generation 737-800, the P-8A combines superior performance and reliability with an advanced mission system designed for maximum interoperability in the future battle space.

Based in Wichita, Kan., Spirit AeroSystems is the world's largest independent supplier of large component parts and assemblies for commercial aircraft. Spirit designs and builds the all-composite forward fuselage for the Boeing 787 in addition to pylon and wing structures for the new airplane. Spirit produces the fuselage, engine pylons and nacelles, vertical fin and horizontal stabilizer, inboard and outboard flaps for Boeing's Next-Generation 737 family of airplanes. It also builds nose sections, nacelles and pylons for the 747, 767 and 777 aircraft, as well as slats and floor beams for the 777 and wing and fuselage components for the 747.

Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $32.4 billion business with 72,000 employees worldwide.
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