Boeing Set to Begin Assembly of New 777 Freighter as Design Work Nearly Complete

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] is set to begin full production of its new 777 Freighter now that engineers recently have completed more than 90 percent of the design work for the new cargo airplane. Boeing will start assembly of the first 777 Freighter in early 2008 at its Everett, Wash., facility.

Suppliers already have begun production of parts and major components for Boeing's newest freighter. The first 777 Freighter will be delivered to launch customer Air France in the fourth quarter of 2008.

"We designed the 777 Freighter to be the most capable twin-engine cargo airplane," said Larry Loftis, vice president, 777 Program, Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "We are excited to begin building the first 777 Freighter and to put the airplane into service so it can demonstrate its unmatched capabilities."

The 777 Freighter will fly farther and provide more capacity than any other twin-engine cargo airplane. In addition, the main cargo deck door of the 777 Freighter is sized to facilitate easy direct-transfer shipments with the 747 freighter fleet, which provides about half of the world's freighter capacity.

"Our customers have worked with us closely throughout the design of the 777 Freighter, providing valuable guidance in defining the airplane's performance," said Kim Pastega, deputy program manager and engineering leader, 777 Freighter Program. "As a result, the 777 Freighter has been well received by the marketplace, with a customer base that includes traditional cargo carriers and leasing operators."

To date, Boeing has sold 82 777 Freighters to 11 customers, accounting for more than 20 percent of the 777 Program's current backlog.

The 777 Freighter is based on the passenger model 777-200LR Worldliner. Other changes to the 777 Freighter include the strengthening of certain airplane structures; an enhanced, lightweight cargo handling system with built-in test equipment that continually monitors the operational health of the system; and a maneuver load alleviation system to help distribute the load on the airplane in flight.

The 777 Freighter will have a range of 4,885 nmi (9,045 km) with a full payload and general cargo market densities. With a maximum takeoff weight of 766,000 pounds (347,450 kilograms), the 777 Freighter will have a revenue payload capability of more than 226,000 pounds (103 metric tons).

The 777 Freighter is the sixth and newest model of the 777 family of airplanes. The 777 family of airplanes is the market leader in the 300-to-400-seat segment and is preferred by airlines around the world because of its fuel efficiency, reliability and spacious passenger cabin. To date, Boeing has received more than 1,030 orders for the 777 from 53 customers worldwide.

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