

Boeing Begins P-8A Moving Assembly Line

ST. LOUIS, May 20, 2008 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] last week began using a moving assembly line for final assembly of the P-8A Poseidon in Renton, Wash. This military derivative of the Next-Generation 737-800 is expected to move through the final assembly process at a continuous pace similar to commercial 737s.

"This is another important step toward delivering the first P-8A to the U.S. Navy on schedule," said Bob Feldmann, Boeing vice president and P-8 program manager for Boeing Integrated Defense Systems. "The entire team is working extremely hard to meet our commitment to the customer."

Boeing uses the moving assembly line during final assembly positions for the airplane. The P-8s will be positioned in a straight-line configuration on the factory floor and stay at a production station for a period of time before advancing to the next station. Standard processes, visual control systems and point-of-use staging are in place, allowing work to flow continuously and quickly.

"Moving lines are proven to enhance the quality and efficiency of production processes," said Mo Yahyavi, Boeing vice president and P-8 program manager for Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "Boeing has found that moving lines drive out waste and make it easier for employees to solve emergent issues. Problems are more visible, and any employee can stop the line at any time, mustering the help of engineers and other support personnel."

To make the assembly line move during final assembly, Boeing uses a tug that attaches around the front landing gear of the airplane and pulls it to the next position. The tug has an optical sensor that follows a white line along the floor.

The Boeing-led Poseidon industry team is currently under a System Development and Demonstration contract, 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. The P-8A combines superior performance and reliability with an advanced mission system designed for maximum interoperability in the future battle space.

Boeing is the world's leading aerospace company and the largest manufacturer of commercial jetliners and military aircraft combined. Headquartered in Chicago, Boeing employs more than 150,000 people across the United States and in 70 countries.

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