Boeing 787 Vice President Says Program is a Leap Forward on All Fronts

FARNBOROUGH, United Kingdom, July 15 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- The Boeing Company (NYSE: BA) is making steady progress on getting the 787 Dreamliner global production system up and running.

Pat Shanahan, vice president and general manager of the 787 program, reporting on the program's progress at the Farnborough International Airshow, said that the dedicated global partner network is one of the many aspects of the 787 that are a major leap forward for the program.

"Often, when people think of the 787 what immediately comes to mind is a more composite airplane. But it's not just that," said Shanahan. "It's the whole process, from a brand-new design using a new suite of tools that burns 20 percent less fuel to bold innovations in technology to a more comfortable passenger cabin and flying experience."

He emphasized that sales continue to break records, with almost 900 orders to date. As of today, the program has 896 orders from 58 customers, including yesterday's order from Etihad Airways.

"This broad appeal has already translated into repeat business for the 787. In the last year alone, we received orders for 259 787s. Of that number, 63 airplanes have been ordered by eight different repeat customers," he said.

Shanahan also stressed the program is making steady progress, from recent production line moves to an important milestone called Power On, which proved the functionality and installation of the airplane's electric systems, to being almost 100 percent complete on systems hardware and software goals.

"My honest assessment is we worked the right priorities, made the right decisions, and have a lot to be proud of," said Shanahan.

With much of the focus on the first 787 Dreamliner, which is scheduled to fly in the fourth quarter of this year, Shanahan outlined the next set of key activities the plane will undergo.

"We are currently in the build-verification testing process, which validates electronics and hardware on the airplane to make sure they are functioning properly," he said. "Things will really get exciting when we fuel the airplane and start the engines and APU for the first time. After that, we'll move forward into gauntlet testing, which is a series of ground-based tests where we trick the airplane's systems into thinking that it is airborne. Then we'll conduct taxi tests and the airplane will take to the skies."

Shanahan also provided status on the robust testing program that has been ongoing for nearly seven years as well as actions being taken to prepare for certification and derivative development.

He concluded by saying, "The 787 Dreamliner is a fantastic airplane - one that is already changing our industry, meeting customers' needs, and will soon be changing passengers' expectations about flight."

SOURCE: The Boeing Company

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