Boeing Completes 1st Aerial Refuelings of 737 for Australia's Wedgetail AEW&C Program

SEATTLE, Jan. 15, 2009 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] today announced it has completed the first aerial refuelings of a 737 platform. The historic flights were conducted for Project Wedgetail, Australia's airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) program.

Flying at 25,000 feet above Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., on Jan. 7, Boeing pilot Ron Johnston maneuvered the 737-700 AEW&C aircraft into a U.S. Air Force KC-10 tanker's refueling boom envelope and easily maintained its position below the tanker. The 737 received approximately 14,000 pounds of fuel during two connections with the tanker.

"The aircraft was stable, with excellent flying qualities and engine response behind the tanker," said Johnston.

The aircraft achieved another aerial-refueling first on Jan. 10, when it received fuel from an Air Force KC-135 tanker.

"The 737 AEW&C aircraft's highly automated and efficient refueling system worked flawlessly in both tests," said Maureen Dougherty, AEW&C Program vice president for Boeing. "This is a key milestone in certifying the AEW&C system.

"Air-to-air refueling is a force multiplier for the AEW&C aircraft," Dougherty added, "allowing it to stay on station for significantly longer periods of time while providing critical battle-management and surveillance capabilities."

Project Wedgetail includes six 737 AEW&C aircraft plus ground support segments for mission crew training, mission support and system maintenance.

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