Boeing 747-8 Freighter Successfully Completes First Flight

Newest Boeing Freighter Touches Down Safely After 3-Hour, 39-Minute Mission

EVERETT, Wash., Feb. 8 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- The Boeing (NYSE: BA) 747-8 Freighter successfully took to the sky for the first time today before more than 5,000 employees, customers, suppliers and community leaders. The flight begins a test program for the world's most efficient freighter.

With 747 Chief Pilot Mark Feuerstein and Capt. Tom Imrich in the flight deck, the newest member of the 747 family took off at 12:39 p.m. local time from Paine Field in Everett and landed at Paine Field at 4:18 p.m.

"It was a real privilege to be at the controls of this great airplane on its first flight, representing the thousands of folks who made today possible," said Feuerstein. "The airplane performed as expected and handled just like a 747-400."

Today's flight was the first of more than 1,600 flight hours in the test program for the newest member of the Boeing freighter family. The airplane followed a route over Western Washington, where it underwent tests for basic handling qualities and engine performance. The airplane reached a cruising altitude of 17,000 feet (5,181 m) and a speed of up to 230 knots, or about 264 miles (426 km) per hour.

Powered by four General Electric GEnx-2B engines, the 747-8 Freighter will transition its testing program to Moses Lake, Wash., and Palmdale, Calif., where the other two test airplanes will join it in the coming month.

"This truly is a great day for The Boeing Company and the 747 program," said Mo Yahyavi, 747 program general manager and vice president, Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "It's the culmination of the hard work and dedication of our employees, suppliers and customers. While there is still much to do, I am excited to begin the flight-test program, which will demonstrate the capabilities of this airplane."

The 747-8 Freighter is the new, high-capacity 747 that will give cargo operators the lowest operating costs and best economics of any freighter. The airplane is 250 feet, 2 inches (76.3 m) long, which is 18 feet, 4 inches (5.6 m) longer than the 747-400 Freighter. The stretch provides customers with 16 percent more revenue cargo volume compared with its predecessor. That translates to an additional four main-deck pallets and three lower-hold pallets.

"The 747-8 Freighter continues the leadership of the 747 Freighter families, which carries more than half of the world's air freight, making it the standard of the air cargo industry," Yahyavi said.

Boeing launched the airplane on Nov. 14, 2005, with firm orders for 18 747-8 Freighters: 10 from Cargolux of Luxembourg and eight from Nippon Cargo Airlines of Japan. All told, Boeing has secured 108 orders for the 747-8, of which 76 are orders for the new freighter. Cargolux, Nippon Cargo Airlines, AirBridgeCargo Airlines, Atlas Air, Cathay Pacific, Dubai Aerospace Enterprise, Emirates SkyCargo, Guggenheim and Korean Air all have ordered the 747-8 Freighter.

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