Boeing's ZA004 Joins 787 Flight-Test Program

EVERETT, Wash., Feb. 24 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- A third airplane has joined the Boeing (NYSE: BA)787 Dreamliner flight-test program. ZA004, the fourth flight-test airplane to be built, took off at 11:43 a.m. local time from Paine Field in Everett, Wash. The program plan called for ZA004 to fly before ZA003 because the data ZA004 is collecting is needed more quickly both for certification and development of the 787-9.

Captains Heather Ross and Craig Bomben completed a three-hour-and-two-minute flight at 2:45 p.m., landing at Boeing Field in Seattle. Flight-test personnel were also on board to monitor airplane performance.

"Airplane No. 4 operated flawlessly today," Ross said after landing. "We've got a lot of work ahead of us but I can't imagine a better start to the flight test program for this airplane."

Ross will serve as chief pilot for ZA004. This airplane will be used to accomplish the following types of tests: aerodynamics, high-speed performance, propulsion performance, flight loads, community noise and extended operations (ETOPS) and other test conditions.

During today's flight, the airplane reached an altitude of 30,000 feet (9,144 m) and an airspeed of 255 knots, or about 293 miles (472 km) per hour. As the testing of the 787 fleet progresses, the airplane will fly at its expected in-service maximum altitude of 40,000 feet (12,192 m) and speed of Mach 0.85.

"We are continuing to make good progress on the flight test program," said Scott Fancher, vice president and general manager of the 787 program, Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "The team is staying focused and disciplined in keeping the priority on safety and execution of the plan."

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