Boeing 747-8 Freighter Achieves Initial Airworthiness Milestone

MOSES LAKE, Wash., March 11 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Boeing (NYSE: BA) has completed initial airworthiness testing on the 747-8 Freighter. This milestone enables test engineers to be on board during future flights and allows the remaining two 747-8 Freighter test airplanes to begin flight test.

"The airplane is performing as expected in the initial stages of flight test," said Mo Yahyavi, vice president and general manager of the 747 program, Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "That's a tribute to the men and women who helped design and build this airplane."

Since the first flight in early February, the program has conducted 13 flights, achieving several key accomplishments. Pilots have taken the airplane to an altitude of 30,000 feet (9,144 m) and a speed of Mach .65. The program has completed approximately 33 hours of flying. Initial stall tests and other dynamic maneuvers have been run, as well as an extensive checkout of the airplane's systems. Five different pilots have flown the newest Boeing freighter.

"This is a critical milestone in our test and certification plan," said Andy Hammer, test program manager for the 747-8, Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "With the addition of the other two airplanes in the near future, the test program will ramp up significantly. We will expand the flight envelope and demonstrate the airplane's capabilities."

In the weeks ahead, the 747-8 Freighter will reach an altitude of more than 43,000 feet (13,106 m) and a speed of Mach .97. Subsequent testing will push the airplane beyond expected operational conditions.

Flight testing will continue in the months ahead. All told, the 747-8 Freighter test program calls for approximately 3,700 hours of testing using three test airplanes. First delivery is planned for the fourth quarter of this year.

Boeing has secured 108 orders for the 747-8, 76 of which 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 placed orders for 747-8 Freighters.

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