Boeing Begins Assembly of First 747-8 Intercontinental

EVERETT, Wash., May 8 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Boeing (NYSE: BA) today announced it began assembly of the first 747-8 Intercontinental at the factory in Everett, Wash. Late this week, mechanics took the first step in major assembly for the new airplane by loading its wing panels and spars in the assembly tools. The spar is the internal support structure that runs through the full length of the wing.

"This milestone symbolizes the dedication, focus and hard work that our team, suppliers and customers have invested in designing this wonderful airplane," said Mo Yahyavi, vice president and general manager of the 747 program, Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "The 747-8 Intercontinental will provide our customers with increased levels of passenger comfort, greatly improved fuel efficiency and reduced emissions and noise."

Deutsche Lufthansa AG was the first airline to order the new, fuel-efficient passenger airplane, contracting for 20 747-8 Intercontinentals, with purchase rights for an additional 20. "We are very pleased to see that the production on the 747-8 Intercontinental has begun," said Nico Buchholz, senior vice president, Corporate Fleet of Deutsche Lufthansa AG. "We are looking forward to welcoming the aircraft in our fleet as it is a component of Lufthansa's strategy to modernize its fleet and increase environmental stewardship. The 747-8 shows our clear commitment to customer orientation."

The new 747-8 Intercontinental is stretched 18.3 feet (5.6 m) from the 747-400 to provide 467 seats -- 51 more than its predecessor -- in a three-class configuration. GEnx-2B engines and a new wing design provide airlines a quieter, more fuel-efficient airplane. The 747-8 is 16 percent more fuel efficient and creates a 30 percent smaller noise footprint than its predecessor. The 747-8 also provides nearly equivalent trip costs and 13 percent lower seat-mile costs than the 747-400, plus 26 percent greater cargo volume.

The 747-8 interior incorporates features from the 787 Dreamliner, including a new curved, upswept architecture that gives passengers a greater sense of space and comfort while adding more room for personal belongings. The architecture is accentuated by lighting technology that provides smooth transitions for a more restful flight.

The 747-8, which includes the 747-8 Intercontinental and the 747-8 Freighter, was launched in November 2005. Boeing has 108 orders for the 747-8 -- 32 for the 747-8 Intercontinental and 76 for the 747-8 Freighter. The first 747-8 Intercontinental is scheduled to deliver in late 2011.

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More information: http://www.boeing.com/newairplane/747/design_highlights/

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