Boeing and Air New Zealand Welcome Airline's First 777-300ER Into Fleet

EVERETT, Wash., Dec. 22, 2010 /PRNewswire/ -- Boeing (NYSE: BA) and Air New Zealand welcomed the airline's first 777-300ER (extended range) at a ceremony today at Paine Field in Everett, Wash. Air New Zealand ordered the first of five 777-300ERs in August 2007 to complement the eight Boeing 777-200ERs already in its long-haul fleet.

The airline intends to use the first three airplanes to operate between Auckland, Los Angeles and London beginning April 2011.

Air New Zealand's Boeing 777-300ERs feature a unique, innovative seat experience in the Economy, Premium Economy and Business Premier classes. For example, "Skycouch" seating, known as CuddleClass, is available in the first 10 rows of Economy Class and will allow passengers who book three-wide seat space to raise the footrests with the touch of a button to create a lie-flat space similar to a sofa at home.

Air New Zealand's Premium Economy "Spaceseats" will feature a larger seat area and more room between passengers. When the seat reclines, it slides forward, preserving the personal space of the passenger sitting behind.

All seats have in-seat power and USB connections, allowing passengers to connect their MP3 players with the in-flight entertainment systems.

"The Boeing 777-300ER was an excellent choice for the routes Air New Zealand operates, especially given its 15 percent fuel efficiency improvements over current aircraft and excellent customer proposition," said Air New Zealand Group General Manager, International Airline, Ed Sims.

"The ability to customize the 777-300ER has enabled Air New Zealand to create a number of world firsts," said Sims.

"Few, if any airlines have invested time and money beyond First Class. We have re-invented our Economy and Premium Economy customer experience in every aspect.

"We've created the world's first economy seating that enables people to lie-down, and a Premium Economy seat many airlines call Business Class.

"We're also the first commercial airline to introduce induction ovens for all cabins to give our customers real food; and have developed an IFE system to enable people to be in control of their whole in-flight experience," Sims said.

Air New Zealand was named 2010 Airline of the Year by Air Transport World because of its passenger-pleasing innovations. "The interior of Air New Zealand's Boeing 777-300ERs, with new-concept seats and a sophisticated in-flight entertainment system, is a great example of why Air New Zealand is Airline of the Year," said Marlin Dailey, vice president of Sales & Marketing for Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

"The 777-300ER is an ideal platform for enabling Air New Zealand to once again demonstrate that they are a forward-thinking airline with revolutionary ideas," Dailey said.

Air New Zealand currently has 35 Boeing jets in its fleet and will be the first to take delivery of the 787-9 Dreamliner, with eight on order. The airline also operates Boeing 737-300s, 747-400s and 767-300ERs.

The 777-300ER is 19 percent lighter than its closest competitor, greatly reducing its fuel requirement. It produces 22 percent less carbon dioxide per seat and costs 20 percent less to operate per seat. The airplane has a maximum range of 7,930 nautical miles (14,685 km). The 777 family is the world's most successful twin-engine, twin-aisle airplane. Sixty-one customers around the world have ordered more than 1,100 777s.

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