Refurbished Boeing 737 Paint Hangar Opens to Meet Rate Increase

SEATTLE, July 13, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Boeing (NYSE: BA) has opened a new paint hangar near its Renton, Wash., facility that will help increase its Next-Generation 737 production capacity. The 737 program currently produces 31.5 airplanes per month and expects to go to 35 per month in early 2012, 38 per month in second quarter 2013 and then to 42 per month in the first half of 2014.

One of the first airplanes to be painted in the facility, a 737-700 for Southwest Airlines, was completed yesterday. Paint crews began work in the facility at the beginning of this month and now have incorporated the facility into the 737 production system. The state-of-the-art facility was refurbished in collaboration with the city of Renton.

"The City of Renton is working very closely with Boeing to ensure its ramp up of production of the 737 is seamless," said Renton Mayor Denis Law. "Coupled with Boeing's signing of a 20-year lease agreement for the Renton Municipal Airport, we view the capital improvements such as those at the paint hangar as important signals that Renton will continue to be a center of commercial airplane manufacturing for many years to come. We will continue to do everything we can to ensure Boeing's continued success."

Boeing expects that the market for single-aisle aircraft will continue to grow over the next decade and beyond. With that outlook, the 737 program is taking several steps to ensure enough capacity to meet market demand.

"We identified this paint hangar as a key piece of infrastructure to support our future plans for increased 737 production several years ago," said Beverly Wyse, vice president and general manager, 737 program. "We have a measured approach to meeting rate increases on the program. Bringing this facility online demonstrates our progress."

The paint hangar was originally built in the late 1950s at the start of the 707 program. The hangar also was used to paint 727s and 757s until 1994. The refurbished hangar is 165,000 cubic feet (4,672 cubic meters) by volume. The state-of-the-art environmental control and fire suppression systems meet all environmental and safety requirements. The hangar is equipped to paint all Next-Generation 737 models: -600, -700, -800 and -900. A crew of about eight painters can paint an entire 737 in about three days, depending on the detail of the customer's livery.

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