Boeing Starting Production of KC-46 Tanker Refueling Boom

Program shifting into production from design work

Boeing on plan to deliver 18 KC-46A Tankers by 2017

SEATTLE, Oct. 16, 2012 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] this week begins assembling the first refueling boom for the U.S. Air Force's next-generation aerial refueling tanker aircraft in the KC-46 Boom Assembly Center that opened today at Boeing Field in Seattle.

"We're pleased that this facility opened on schedule," said Maureen Dougherty, KC-46 vice president and program manager for Boeing. "The KC-46A will feature a modernized fly-by-wire boom based on the proven system on the U.S. Air Force's KC-10 tanker, which will give it advanced refueling capabilities, allowing it to refuel any fixed-wing receiver aircraft anytime and on any mission."

Boom assembly marks the program's shift to production from design activities.

"It's a big day for the KC-46 Tanker Program and the U.S. Air Force," said Maj. Gen. John Thompson, U.S. Air Force Tanker Program Executive Officer and KC-46 Program Director. "Boeing continues to make good progress toward delivering the KC-46 Tanker on schedule."

The first boom will enter testing during the third quarter of 2013 at a System Integration Lab (SIL), known as SIL 0. It is one of five labs designed to reduce risk for avionics and aerial refueling integration. Boeing invented the air refueling boom and has been building, upgrading and modifying them for more than 60 years.

Boeing's KC-46 program remains on track to deliver 18 combat-ready tankers by 2017, and for the next major Air Force contract milestone, the Critical Design Review, scheduled for the summer of 2013.

Production of the KC-46 aircraft begins next summer in Boeing's Everett, Wash., factory. The aircraft will be a 767-2C variant of the commercial 767-200ER airplane. Boeing will build 179 next-generation aerial refueling tanker aircraft to begin replacing the Air Force's aging KC-135 tankers.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Defense, Space & Security is one of the world's largest defense, space and security businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions, and the world's largest and most versatile manufacturer of military aircraft. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Defense, Space & Security is a $32 billion business with 61,000 employees worldwide. Follow us on Twitter: @BoeingDefense.

# # #

Contact:

Jerry Drelling
KC-46 Tanker Program
Office: 425-266-4924
Mobile: 714-318-7594
jerry.a.drelling@boeing.com