Boeing EMARSS Risk Reduction Prototype Makes 1st Flight

Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft cleared to enter FAA certification program

FAIRFAX, Va., Oct. 22, 2012 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] completed the first flight of the Enhanced Medium Altitude Reconnaissance and Surveillance System (EMARSS) Risk Reduction Prototype (ERRP) aircraft on Saturday, Oct. 6, a critical step required to support a comprehensive U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) flight test program.

The aircraft, a Hawker Beechcraft King Air 350ER, has been modified to replicate the design of the EMARSS aircraft's external fuselage. The Boeing team conducted return-to-flight maintenance checks during the 70-minute flight over Middletown, Del.

"First flight is a huge accomplishment, and I'm particularly grateful to Summit Aviation for their hard work in modifying the aircraft," said Randy Price, EMARSS program manager for Boeing. "As we analyze what we learned, we'll continue lowering risk and improving performance, which ultimately will benefit U.S. Army warfighters who will use EMARSS' near real-time intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities."

The FAA flight test program will validate the modified King Air prototype's flight and handling qualities. Following the FAA flight tests, the program will apply for FAA Supplemental Type Certification.

"That FAA certification supports the airworthiness release to be issued by the Army Engineering Directorate for EMARSS," Price said. "We can focus subsequent testing of the Engineering and Manufacturing Development (EMD) aircraft on the mission systems capabilities and operational aspects and qualification of the platform."

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