Boeing 777X Wind Tunnel Testing Under Way

SEATTLE, Dec. 9, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Boeing [NYSE:BA] announced today that low-speed wind tunnel tests have begun for the Boeing 777X, a major milestone in airplane development.

"This is the first major development milestone for the program since we launched the program last month," saidTerry Beezhold, vice president and chief project engineer of the 777X program. "Wind tunnel testing will validate our performance models and generate a vast amount of data that our engineering teams will use to design the airplane in this phase of development."

Testing started on Dec. 5 at QinetiQ's test facility in Farnborough,U.K. Wind tunnel models allow experts to test many different configurations for the airplane. Low-speed tests measure airplane performance with a variety of high-lift surface settings to simulate takeoff and landing conditions.

The low-speed model currently being tested is a 5.5 percent scale model of the baseline 777X, measuring about 4.22 meters (166 inches) long with a wing span of 3.92 meters (154 inches). Hundreds of sensors are embedded in the model to measure pressure to determine the in-flight loads as well as provide valuable diagnostics of the aerodynamic performance of a given design.

Low-speed testing at the QinetiQ facility is expected to last approximately five months. Testing also will be conducted next year at the Boeing Transonic Wind Tunnel in Seattle to further validate 777X high-speed performance projections.

"We are on track to complete our top-level design in 2014 and reach firm configuration in 2015," said Beezhold.

The 777X family includes the 777-8X and the 777-9X, both designed to respond to market needs and customer preferences. The airplane introduces the latest technologies in multiple places, including the most advanced commercial engine ever – the GE9X by GE Aviation – and an all-new high-efficiency composite wing that has a longer span than today's 777.

Boeing and QinetiQ recently concluded an agreement that will extend the wind tunnel partnership at Farnborough for an additional five years.

The 777X program was launched last month with 259 orders and commitments from Emirates, Etihad, Lufthansa and Qatar Airways.

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