

A grand achievement

777 program tops 1,000-order milestone

By CHUCK CADENA

On Aug. 23, Boeing posted an order for four 777-300ERs from an unidentified customer that put the order tally for the 777 past 1,000.

The 777 Program reached this milestone faster than any previous twin-aisle commercial airplane program. The customer for that order was later identified as TAM Airlines, Brazil's largest airline.

"We have continually enhanced and improved the performance of the 777 family of airplanes," said Larry Loftis, vice president, Boeing 777 Program. "Today, we have grown that family to include two new longer-range 777s and a freighter version that will enter service in the fourth quarter of 2008."

"Two major reasons the 777 has been such a success are the versatility of the airplane's basic design and the pioneering philosophy that the 777 be service-ready to fly routes requiring extended operations rules," said Bob Buchholz, a retired engineer with 36 years of service who last served as chief engineer for 777 Performance.

Buchholz noted how ensuring the 777 was ready to fly routes under extended operations rules when it entered service removed a key advantage of the 777's four-engine competitor. Similarly to how the 767 opened trans-Atlantic routes using extended operations, the 777 opened routes across the north Pacific and over the North Pole for twin-engine airplanes.

APPRECIATED BY FLIERS

Yet it's not just airlines that appreciate the jetliner. The flying public has taken a liking to it as well. Since its introduction, the 777 has consistently held more than 60 percent market share, and passenger surveys have shown a preference by fliers for the 777.

"After 12 years in service, the 777 remains the preference of airlines and passengers around the world," said Suzanna Darcy-Hennemann, the chief pilot for the 777 Program.

In August, the 777 Program surpassed the 1,000-order mark when TAM Airlines placed an order for four 777-300ERs. To date, the 777 has won 1,004 orders from 52 customers around the world.



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"Having worked product strategy for the 777 since its inception, I am gratified to see orders go past 1,000," said Dennis Morden, 777 product manager, Commercial Airplanes Product Strategy. "It has been a privilege to be associated with a program where each of the models introduced delivered more than was promised to our customers."

Morden noted how the in-service performance of the 777 proved the efficiency and reliability of twin-engine airplanes for long-haul operations.

"Today, even our competitor is planning to use a twin-engine airplane to replace its four-engine intermediate-size airplanes," Morden said. ■

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By the numbers: 777 Program

Here's a look at some of the numbers behind the achievements of the Boeing 777 Program since the jetliner entered service 12 years ago:

1,004 The number of orders received to date for the 777 from 52 customers. In addition, two airlines operate 777s through lease only.

778 million The number of people the 777 fleet has carried worldwide since the airplane entered service June 7, 1995.

7 billion The number of nautical miles the 777 fleet has flown to date (13 billion kilometers), equivalent to 322,000 trips around the world.

14.5 million The number of cumulative flight hours for the 777 fleet on more than 3.3 million flights, which includes more than 1 million flights under extended operations rules.