Boeing May Deliver First 787s As Early As August

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LE BOURGET, France (AP) — Boeing will deliver the first of its much-delayed 787 wide-bodied jets to launch customer All Nippon Airways as early as August, officials said Wednesday.

At a joint ceremony at the Paris Air Show, the two companies showcased the new plane — known as the Dreamliner — saying it will allow airlines to open up a number of new long-haul routes.

"Its delivery is planned for August or September this year," said All Nippon Airways, or ANA, vice president Shuichi Fujimura.

Developmental problems have delayed the revolutionary new-generation jet's introduction into passenger service by three years. More than 800 have so far been ordered by over 50 airlines.

Fujimura said ANA expects to receive 14 Dreamliners by next March. ANA has a total of 55 787s on order.

"We have a target to expand our route network, and the 787 will play a significant role in that plan," said Fujimura, who was speaking at a news conference together with Scott Fancher, Boeing's 787 program head.

The twin-engine 787 is made mostly of carbon fiber and other composite materials, which make it lighter and therefore more fuel-efficient than other mid-sized airliners. Its twin-aisle passenger cabin accommodates up to 250 passengers.

Because of the 787s improved range, ANA plans to use it on a number of new long-haul routes that were not previously commercially viable because there were not enough passengers to justify using larger aircraft such as the Boeing 747, Fujimura said.

The plane made its debut at the Paris Air Show when it arrived direct from Seattle late Tuesday.

Airbus' competitor with the 787, the A350, is scheduled to enter service with Qatar Airways in 2013. Airbus has racked up nearly 600 orders for the new jetliner, which is also mainly made out of carbon-fiber polymers.

Boeing expects to deliver up to 20 787s by the end of this year. By 2013, it plans to achieve a delivery rate of 10 planes a month from its production lines in Everett, Washington, and Charleston, South Carolina.

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