

Boeing Delivers 747 To VIP Customer

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Boeing said on Tuesday that it's on track to deliver the first of its new 747s that will haul paying passengers early this year.

Flight testing on the 747-8 Intercontinental will wrap up in five to seven days, said Elizabeth Lund, program manager for the 747. The first customer for that plane is German airline Lufthansa.

On Tuesday, Boeing delivered a new 747-8 to an unidentified VIP customer. It was something of a formality. The plane still needs modification in Wichita, Kan., that will take about six months. After that it goes to Hamburg, Germany, to have its VIP interior installed, a project that typically takes about two years, said Steve Taylor, president of Boeing Business Jets.

Boeing has been making the 747 for more than 40 years, but this is a major overhaul. The new version includes changes to 70 percent of the plane.

Boeing first delivered a cargo version in October. The VIP plane delivered on Tuesday still needs most of its interior. The passenger version that will go to Lufthansa needs more testing because it has electronics such as on-board entertainment that the other planes don't have, Boeing said.

Boeing has booked orders for 96 of the new 747s. That includes 60 cargo planes and 36 passenger planes. Of those, nine have been ordered by VIP customers. Boeing said most of those are heads of state, generally in the Middle East.

Boeing is also aiming to sell the plane to the White House to be used as the new Air Force One. The White House currently flies two older 747s.

Shares of Chicago-based Boeing Co. fell 5 cents to close at \$75.16.

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