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The Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Boeing Co. said Tuesday that it has begun building its 777 jet at the highest rate that it's ever made a big passenger jet, aiming to crank out more than eight planes per month.

Boeing has long said it would ramp up the pace of 777 production. It's also speeding up its smaller 737 and it's new, long-haul 787.

Boeing will build 8.3 of the 777s per month at its factory for large jets in Everett, Wash. Boeing said the increase is a jump of almost 20 percent over its previous rate of seven per month.

Boeing said it hired and trained hundreds of additional workers for the speedup.

The first plane to be built at the faster rate is a 777 freighter, with an expected delivery to Korean Air in February.

Boeing has a backlog for 335 of the planes, and it's continuing to book new orders. List prices run from \$258 million to \$315 million, although discounts are common.

Boeing shares fell \$1 to \$72.70 in midday trading amid a broad market decline.

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