Boeing Examining Speed-Ups On 787, 737

The Associated Press

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Boeing may accelerate production of two of its most popular planes — the 787 and the 737.

It's already doubling 787 production, from 5 per month last year, on its way toward 10 per month by the end of this year. The efficiency of the 787, Boeing's newest plane, has made it very popular with airlines. The company has orders for more than 800 that it hasn't built yet.

Production of 787s continued this year even while deliveries were halted due to problems with the plane's lithium-ion battery. Those problems were addressed, to the satisfaction of regulators, and deliveries have resumed.

The company has also been ramping up production of its 737. It builds one per day and plans to raise production to 42 per month.

Chairman and CEO Jim McNerney said Boeing has an "upper bias" toward speeding up production of both planes. Boeing, he said, has been especially cautious in its decision about 737 production because it increases costs for the manufacturer.

The 787 is assembled in Everett, Wash. and in North Charleston, S.C., where McNerney spoke Wednesday during an investor update. It builds 737s in Renton, Wash.

Higher production doesn't always mean more jobs. Not only are Boeing's planes becoming more efficient, its production methods are as well.

In North Charleston, for instance, it has begun using fewer contractors after working out the early bugs from its new assembly line there.

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