CHINA'S AVIC RECEIVES 185 ORDERS FOR THE MA700

News / Manufacturer

The Aviation Corp. of China (AVIC) has received 185 orders for the Chinese regional turboprop MA700 from 11 customers. According to AVIC VP Geng Ruguang, the MA700 will be off the final assembly line and will launch its inaugural flight in 2017. It is scheduled to get an airworthiness certificate and be delivered to its first customer in 2019.

The MA700 is the stretched version of the 60-seat MA600, which entered the market in 2013. The -700 features increased seating capacity for 70-90 passengers; it introduces a high-efficient, six-blade propeller and a T-tail empennage that makes the aircraft faster than its predecessors.

The 11 customers are Tianjin-based Okay Airways, Xi'an-based Joy Air, Cambodia Bayon Airlines, China Development Bank Leasing Co., China Merchants Bank Financial Leasing Co., Chongqing General Aviation Financial Leasing Co., Poly Technologies Co., Nepal Air Avenues Co., Bahrain EGA Group, Pakistan Hybrid Aviation and South Africa Segers Aero.

AVIC chief designer Dong Jianhong said the price and fuel efficiency of MA700 will be lower than its foreign counterparts. "We hope to explore global market including western countries and our target is to take up one-third shares of global turboprop market in the next 10 years," Dong noted.

Local industry analysts said it is still difficult for Chinese regional carriers to make a profit due to high operating costs and "lack of connection with trunk routes." For example, AVIC subsidiary Joy Air

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operates a fleet of nine MA60 regional aircraft, but is still in the red.

Joy Air plans to launch a new regional joint venture (JV) with the Xi'an-based regionalOkay Airways, which operates 13 MA60s. According to an industry insider, both carriers plan to introduce 40 to 60 MA60 aircraft for the new venture.

Joy Air and Okay Airways ordered 30 MA700 aircraft, respectively.

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