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Boeing Co. announces launch of the 7E7 airliner, first new aircraft since 1997

By Tim Klass
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE — The Boeing Co. board of directors has approved production of its roomier, more fuel-efficient 7E7 Dreamliner now that it has an order for the first 50 planes from All Nippon Airways, the manufacturer and carrier announced Monday.

The order is worth \$6 billion at list prices, although airlines typically negotiate substantial discounts for large orders. The precise dollar figure of the order was withheld.

Dreamliner production is scheduled to begin in 2006. The first flight by one of the planes is anticipated the next year and deliveries are scheduled to begin in 2008, according to a statement.

The 7E7 is designed to compete with the Airbus A330-200 series as well as to replace the 757 and 767. It is Boeing's first all-new plane since 1990.

The deal is a record for the number of planes in a single

customer's order that initiates production by Boeing. The old record was set in 1960 when Eastern Airlines and United Airlines each ordered 40 of the new 727s.

More 7E7 orders are likely in the coming weeks and months but "probably not on the order of magnitude of this order," Boeing Commercial Airplanes spokeswoman Yvonne Leach said in a telephone interview.

"I think we'll see something happening in China in the relatively near term," Mike Bair, Boeing's senior vice president for the 7E7, said in a conference call.

The order includes the short-haul Model 3, which will have about 300 seats, and the longer-range Model 8, with 230 seats in two classes, with the exact number of each to be determined later.

"ANA's selection of the Boeing 7E7 is consistent with our stated goal to operate the safest, most modern, efficient and comfortable fleet of aircraft in the world," ANA president Yoichi Ohashi said in the joint statement.

Boeing's Dreamliner awakens to reality

All Nippon Airways (ANA) ordered 50 Boeing 7E7 Dreamliner passenger jets to be delivered in 2008. It was the first order for the new plane — designed to compete with the Airbus A330-200.

Model of 7E7 Dreamliner passenger jet



	SEATING*	MAX RANGE	WINGSPAN	LENGTH
Boeing 7E7	200	9,775 mi	193 feet	185 feet
Airbus A330-200	253	7,648 mi	198 feet	198 feet

SOURCES: Boeing Co.; Airbus SAS

While Airbus has touted its 550-passenger A380 as a solution that enables airlines to pack more customers onto each flight between major hubs, Boeing is betting that carriers will prefer smaller, more efficient airplanes to get passengers to their destinations more directly.

Shares of Boeing gained 87

cents, or 2 percent, in morning trading Monday on the New York Stock Exchange. The Dreamliner, designed to use 15 percent to 20 percent less fuel per passenger providing bigger windows, slightly wider aisles and more legroom than other airliners, is assembled in Everett.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kerry answers critics of anti-war protests by questioning Bush's service

WHEELING, W.Va. (AP) — John Kerry, a decorated Navy veteran criticized by Republicans for his anti-war activities during the Vietnam era, lashed out at President Bush on Monday for failing to prove whether he fulfilled his commitment to the National Guard during the same period.

Conservative critics have questioned whether Kerry deserved all three of his Purple Hearts for battle wounds, an issue the Democratic presidential candidate sought to put to rest last week by releasing his military records. On Sunday, a top Bush adviser criticized Kerry for leading anti-war protests after he returned from the battlefield.

"This comes from a president who can't even show or prove that he showed up for duty in the National Guard," Kerry said

Monday during an interview on ABC's "Good Morning America." "And I'm not going to stand for it."

Kerry's direct criticism of Bush's Guard record reflects an aggressive strategy to challenge the president.

U.S. Supreme Court won't hear school prayer case; justices spar over reason

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two of the Supreme Court's most conservative members delivered an unusual public rebuke to liberal justices Monday, accusing them of ducking an important church-state fight over mealtime prayers at a taxpayer-funded military college.

Justice Antonin Scalia, joined by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, said the court should have taken the case to answer the first time whether its ban on school-sponsored prayer for children and high schoolers applies to college students at

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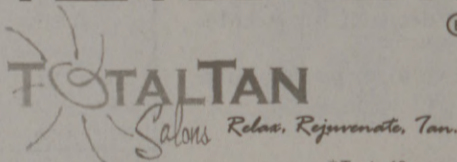
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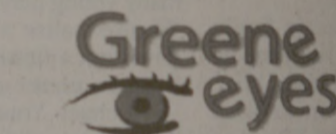
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