

Dream come true

Delivery of the 787 Dreamliner marks a journey shared by many Photos by Bob Ferguson

It was raining hard outside the Boeing plant in Everett, Wash. No one seemed to mind.

Nothing could dampen the spirit of the thousands of employees who came together Sept. 26 for this history-making event, along with partners, dignitaries and special guests.

Thousands more participated virtually in a live webcast.

The ceremony marking first delivery of a 787 to launch customer ANA (All Nippon Airways) began with some 500 Boeing employees on the 787 team escorting the airline's



Dreamliner to its delivery position in front of the factory's massive doors.

Among the 500 was Allen Stinnette, one of the lead test engineers for the Boeing Test & Evaluation Systems Integration and Test Labs.

"As we walked in front of the airplane I felt a great sense of satisfaction," Stinnette said. "All of the long days we worked were worth it."

At the end of the procession, employees bowed in unison as a sign of respect for ANA and its president and CEO, Shinichiro Ito.

"ANA showed Boeing a great deal of respect by being patient through our challenges. We honored that by bowing at the ceremony," noted Ted Holstein, schedule integrator for Dreamliner Operations.

Among the Boeing leaders who spoke was Jim Albaugh, president and CEO of Commercial Airplanes. "It's not often that we have the chance to make history, do something big and bold that will change the world in untold ways and endure long after we are gone."

Ito then spoke of "lovingly" taking the first 787 home to Japan. And he talked about the special bond between Boeing and ANA employees.

"I'll be on the delivery flight and will hold on tight to the dreams of everyone gathered here," Ito said.

Ingrid Stroeder, a supply chain analyst at the Everett Delivery Center, was touched by Ito's comments. "When he talked about teaming, you knew he meant it," she said. "I loved watching his whole face brighten as he was handed the key to the plane."

She was not alone with her feelings. Many were similarly moved by what they saw and heard during the ceremony.

"This delivery gave a boost to dreams of tomorrow," said Pearlie Welch, Quality records specialist for Boeing Test & Evaluation.

Joann Wells was representing the Boeing South Carolina team, which next year will be delivering 787 Dreamliners made there.

"There were tears of joy from people all around us," Wells said. "I could not help but cry, too. It was just fantastic."

Scott Gaskin, lead Manufacturing Engineer, Everett Modification Center, described it as an "over-the-top, once-in-a-lifetime experience. I could feel the excitement in the air."

Justin Hale, former 787 deputy chief

mechanic, said he thought of "all the people who had provided the genius to make the 787 a truly unrivaled airplane."

"It was impossible to ignore the beauty, quality and ingenuity of the Dreamliner," Hale said.

In closing the ceremony, Scott Fancher, vice president and general manager of the 787 program, said to the team: "You have succeeded in delivering an amazing airplane. You did it while respecting the needs of our customers and the traveling public. And you did it by never compromising on doing the right thing."


Ian Nash, 787 Final Assembly and Delivery team, may have best summed it up by saying, "Now we all get the honor of delivering 800-plus more Dreamliners." ■

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"Embodied in this incredible machine are 95 years of Boeing aerospace know-how."

— Jim McNerney, Boeing chairman, president and CEO



A group of Boeing employees, including men and women of various ethnicities, are standing in a line on a factory floor. They are looking towards a large, dark, curved aircraft component, likely a wing or tail section, which is suspended from the ceiling. The background is a bright blue wall with a grid pattern. The lighting is bright, casting long shadows on the floor.

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***“I cannot wait to see the day when the
skies of the world are filled with 787s.”***

– ANA President and CEO Shinichiro Ito

