

Historic Universal Hydrogen flight shines brightly on Connect Airlines zero-emission future

Bedford, Mass. and Moses Lake, Wash., March 2, 2023 – The following is a statement from John Thomas, CEO of Connect Airlines marking the historic first flight of the largest hydrogen fuel cell powered aircraft ever to take to the skies and the largest aircraft to cruise principally on hydrogen.

“Today’s first flight will go down in the history books as the true start to the decarbonization of the global airline industry and we at Connect Airlines are extremely proud of the role that we, as the first US operator, will play in leading the way with Universal Hydrogen.

Our partnership provides the fastest path to zero-emission operation for the global airline industry because it offers both an affordable retrofit solution for the existing airplane fleet as well as a pragmatic approach to delivering hydrogen to any airport in our route network. Combining Universal Hydrogen’s new technology with lower execution risk and commercial viability is a clear formula for success.

Connect has placed a first-position US order with Universal Hydrogen to convert 75 ATR 72 regional aircraft to hydrogen powertrains with purchase rights for 25 additional aircraft conversions. Deliveries are planned to start in 2025. Considering that approximately 1400 inefficient regional jets make up 40% of domestic US departures, there is a lot of room for Connect Airlines to grow. By replacing many of these regional jets initially with lower emitting regional turboprops followed by zero-emission hydrogen fueled planes, Connect is leading the global aviation industry towards carbon neutrality.

We have committed to being the first North American airline to fly zero-emission aircraft and today’s unprecedented flight, taking hydrogen which can be made with nothing but sunshine and emitting only water, is an historic milestone on our journey.”

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About Connect Airlines

Connect Airlines is an operating brand of Waltzing Matilda Airlines (WMA), a Boston based FAA Part 135 charter operator currently adding FAA Part 121 scheduled and non-scheduled services. WMA identified the need for a "smarter airline" and brought together aviation leaders with over 150 years' experience who share a common passion – to work and fly smarter. With the planes we fly, the technology we use, and the operations we run, Connect Airlines will deliver a quieter, cleaner, and healthier travel experience. Connect Airlines, the future of smarter, greener travel.

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**A SMARTER
WAY TO FLY**



Connects' new regional transborder service

- Connect Airlines to start service between Philadelphia (PHL) and Chicago O'Hare (ORD) to Toronto's Waterfront City Centre Airport this spring (YTZ)*. More US cities to be added after initial launch to/from YTZ.
- Connect service will feature the environmentally friendlier Dash 8-400 aircraft reducing the carbon footprint by ~40% vs comparably sized regional jets and with comparable travel time to jet options.
- Economy and Premium Economy cabin seating with Premium Economy Cabin offering additional 5" of legroom, full meal and drink service and priority security/boarding.
- Cabin to include full-sized overhead compartments for carry on storage.

First US airline to fly zero-emission aircraft

- Through its strategic partnership with Universal Hydrogen, Connect will become the first US airline to operate zero-emission aircraft.
- Connect is Universal Hydrogen's US launch customer with orders to convert 75 ATR 72 regional aircraft to hydrogen powertrains with purchase rights for 25 additional conversions.
- Potential to scale up quickly considering US market has approximately 1400 inefficient regional jets in service.
- Four out of 10 domestic US departures are on high carbon emitting regional jets.
- Hydrogen powertrain conversion kit deliveries to commence in 2025.

*Subject to regulatory approval

