Columbia Aircraft recalls 181 of 300 furloughed employees

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Company Certifies 100th Aircraft Built in 2007

Columbia Aircraft of Bend, Oregon has begun recalling a portion of the approximate 300 employees laid off earlier this month in response to a problem with faulty integrated avionics systems provided by their supplier, Garmin, that made it impossible for the company to issue a Certificate of Airworthiness to customer specifications for delivery.

Last week, Columbia recalled about 75 employees when Garmin resumed deliveries of the G1000 avionics suite. This week an additional 106 employees were recalled, and more of the affected employees are expected to be put back to work as the production line advances.

To celebrate the commencement of production, Columbia certified its 100th aircraft of 2007. â€œCertifying number 100 for the year is a gratifying moment,â€• said Columbia Aircraft Manufacturing CEO Wan Majid. â€œDespite the turmoil of certification delays, acts of nature and supply chain disruption, Columbia continues to achieve significant milestones. Granted weâ€™d like to be doing so without as many external challenges, but our team continues to rise to the occasion time and again.â€•

The certification delays, acts of nature, and supply chain disruptions Majid alluded to resulted in three rounds of layoffs this year.

On March 8, ten percent of the workforce was laid off in what Columbia described as a â€œpermanent reduction of workforce to better align staffing levels with current production needs.â€•

On March 22, an additional 185 employees were furloughed in a â€œtemporary workforce alignment, and the company experienced a shakeup in senior management with the acquisition of a new CEO and four key

executive. In May, the company began recalling the workers affected by the March 22 lay-offs.

Then, on August 14, Columbia announced the furlough of 300 employees in response to the avionics suite problem, stating at that time that more lay-offs were possible.

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