12 YEARS AFTER FIRST FLIGHT, HONDAJET CERT WITHIN GRASP

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Twelve years after the Honda Motor Co. announced the **first flight** of its experimental compact business jet, the HondaJet, the since formed Honda Aircraft is on the cusp of **certification** and entry-into-service of the first of what is anticipated will be a family of **HondaJet** aircraft.

Honda announced the first flight of the experimental HondaJet on Dec. 13, 2003. The prototype aircraft flew from Piedmont Triad Airport in North Carolina, near the location of the expansive headquarters campus that Honda has developed over the ensuing 12 years. That flight culminated research that had been ongoing since 1986. At the time, a timeline for the new aircraft was not set. But three years later, Honda Aircraft was formed and the order book officially opened.

Since December 2003, the HA-420 program has amassed more 3,000 flight hours, with five production aircraft flying. At the recent NBAA convention, Honda Aircraft president and CEO Michimasa Fujino said the aircraft was concluding function and reliability testing and certification and first deliveries were anticipated by year-end. “We are expecting FAA type certification of the world’s most advanced light jet very soon,” Fujino had announced. Deliveries are expected to ramp up fairly quickly. Honda Aircraft had 25 more aircraft on the production line.

Fujino, who has long maintained that Honda Aircraft was never meant to be a one-aircraft company, reiterated that stance saying the aircraft was designed to be scalable for a family. But he was not yet ready to reveal what may be next.

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