

Beechcraft Pushing Turboprops Over Jets

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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American aerospace manufacturer Beechcraft is hoping for an upturn in demand for its line of larger King Air planes in Russia on the back of the government's effort to develop regional flights.

King Air 350i, a twin-engine turboprop that can seat up to 11 people, would be the company's best offer in a bid to capitalize on the new demand, said Scott Plumb, Beechcraft's vice president for sales in Europe, Middle East and Asia.

"I would say our best promise is on the King Air 350i," he said in a phone interview.

Plumb said the Russian government is assisting businesses in creating a network of regional airlines in a push that began last year to facilitate short-distance air travel.

Beechcraft also takes aim at corporate buyers and "ultra high net-worth" individuals, such as

entrepreneurs, with a smaller version of the King Air craft, he said.

The company is participating in this week's Jet Expo, a business aviation show at Moscow's Vnukovo-3 Airport. So far, the plane maker sold just a "handful" turboprops to Russian customers, Plumb said.

Of 110 business aircraft registered in Russia, turboprops account for 20 percent, but Beechcraft said that share could rise.

Turboprops cost substantially less than a jet of the equivalent size and are more economical to operate, Plumb said in a statement.

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