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EL SEGUNDO, Calif., March 2, 2010 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] announced today that the U.S. Air Force accepted control of the third Wideband Global SATCOM (WGS) military communications satellite on March 1, after the spacecraft passed several weeks of rigorous on-orbit tests.

WGS is the U.S. Department of Defense's highest-capacity satellite communications system. WGS-3 completes the initial constellation of three spacecraft, which will provide broadband communications to every theater of operation around the world.

"Knowledge is power, especially on the battlefield, where the ability to quickly communicate large amounts of information can make a world of difference to mission success," said Air Force Col. Don Robbins, WGS Group Commander. "With their wide bandwidth and high throughput, WGS satellites are game-changers that give our warfighters a distinct advantage."

Boeing is building three more WGS satellites under Block II of its contract with the Air Force. The Block II satellites will include performance boosters such as a radio frequency bypass designed to support airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms requiring additional bandwidth.

"We're working with the Air Force to develop cost-effective solutions to the crucial communications challenges facing U.S. warfighters, such as mobile communications, secure and jam-resistant communications, and enhanced support to advanced intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations," said Craig Cooning, vice president and general manager, Boeing Space and Intelligence Systems. "We're showing that future WGS satellites can be efficiently evolved to meet those challenges, and we have a proven, high-performing team of Air Force and Boeing personnel in place to make it happen."

WGS-3 was launched on Dec. 5, 2009, from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., aboard a Delta IV rocket. On-orbit testing demonstrated the functionality of WGS-3's communications payload features by passing test signals through each of the satellite's 19 antenna beams. The tests also verified WGS-3's beam-steering functions.

Boeing employees conducted the tests at the company's Mission Control Center in El Segundo, with support from Air Force and Army personnel at the center and at government facilities in central California. Air Force operations personnel at Schriever Air Force Base in Colorado are conducting additional tests and moving WGS-3 into its operational position over the Atlantic Ocean. The satellite is expected to become operational this spring.

WGS-1 and WGS-2 are operating over the Pacific Ocean and the Middle East, respectively. WGS-4, -5 and -6 will be ready for launch in 2011 and 2012.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Defense, Space & Security is one of the world's largest defense, space and security businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions, and the world's largest and most versatile manufacturer of military aircraft. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Defense, Space & Security is a $34 billion business with 68,000 employees worldwide.

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