

Second Successful Boeing Delta II Launch in One Week Delivers NASA's Advanced Composition Explorer (ACE)

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A Boeing Delta II 7920 successfully delivered NASA's Advanced Composition Explorer (ACE) observatory at 10:39 a.m. EDT to an elliptical transfer orbit in preparation for its one million-mile journey. ACE then will use its own propulsion system to establish an orbit between the Earth and the sun. This is the second launch under the Boeing (NYSE:BA) name and the first from Cape Canaveral.

The Advanced Composition Explorer will study space matter including the solar corona and galactic matter. Study of the energetic particles may contribute to our understanding of the formation and evolution of the solar system. ACE also will provide near-real-time monitoring of solar wind that will allow advanced warning of geomagnetic storms. From ACE's position in orbit, the observatory will have a prime view of the Sun and beyond the galaxy. ACE has a two-year minimum mission lifetime and a goal of five years.

"The success of today's Delta II launch marks another historic role launch vehicles have played in the scientific arena," said Darryl Van Dorn, Boeing director for NASA and commercial Delta programs. "The Delta II team is very enthusiastic in its involvement with over 70 of NASA's scientific missions."

This is the ninth of 10 firm launches encompassed in NASA's 1990 Medium Expendable Launch Vehicle Services (MELVS) contract with five options remaining. Under a second contract, the Medium Light Expendable Launch Vehicle Services (Med-Lite) contract for a medium-light class of NASA satellites, a scaled-down Delta II is scheduled to launch six missions. The six missions scheduled are: Far Ultraviolet Spectroscopy (FUSE), Mars Orbiter-2, and Deep Space-1 in 1998; and Mars Lander-1, STARDUST and EO-1/SAC-C in 1999. Eight options remain in the Med-Lite contract.

Earlier this week a Boeing Delta II launched five IRIDIUM system satellites from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., completing one-third of the 66 satellite constellation.

Subcontractors contributing to the Delta II launch vehicle include the Rocketdyne Division of Boeing, Canoga Park, Calif., for the main engine, Alliant Techsystems, Magna, Utah, graphite epoxy motors for boost assist; Aerojet, Sacramento, Calif., second-stage engine; and Allied Signal, Teterboro, N.J., Redundant Inertial Flight Control Assembly.

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