Delta II and Iridium® Pair for Fifth Launch From Vandenberg

A Boeing Delta II will boost an IRIDIUM® payload containing five commercial satellites into low-Earth orbit no earlier than November 8 at 5:34:26 p.m. PST.

The launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., must take place within a five-second window. The Delta II has successfully delivered 20 IRIDIUM satellites in four previous launches. This next mission will be the fifth Delta launch for IRIDIUM within six months. A total of seven IRIDIUM launches since May 5 have placed 34 satellites into orbit.

"This is the largest commercial satellite constellation ever launched by Boeing and we are very pleased with the success we have achieved thus far. We would like to thank our teammates at Motorola and Iridium LLC for the opportunity to provide our launch services," said William Hampton, Boeing manager of Motorola Programs.

The Iridium constellation is a planned 66-satellite network, with 11 satellites orbiting in six separate low-Earth, polar-orbital planes. Once operational, the system will provide mobile telecommunications to virtually any location on the surface of the Earth.

Boeing will launch the majority of the satellites comprising the IRIDIUM constellation, playing a significant role in reaching Iridium's goal of providing worldwide mobile telecommunications service by late 1998. The reliable Delta family of launch vehicles has a firm backlog of 17 launches scheduled for next year including the first Delta III.

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Media wishing to cover the launch should contact the VAFB Public Affairs office at (805) 734-8232 ext. 6-3595.

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