Mission Accomplished: Boeing Completes Delivery of Power Control Modules for International Space Station's U.S.

Major scientific breakthroughs to be made on the International Space Station are another step closer as The Boeing Company today delivered a final piece of hardware to complete a key element of the electric power system (EPS) for the space station's U.S. Laboratory.

The Boeing product team at Rocketdyne Propulsion & Power in Canoga Park shipped to the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., the final remote power control module (RPCM) of a total of the 40 RPCMs needed to outfit the U.S. Lab. Members of the Boeing Space Station team at Huntsville are installing flight hardware into the U.S. Lab before it is shipped to Kennedy Space Center (KSC) and launched into space on Space Shuttle flight 5A, scheduled for May 1999.

"These boxes may not look very glamorous, exotic or high-tech, but they represent leading-edge space power technology," said Joe Mills, Program Manager, International Space Station EPS. "They will provide a vital link in the complex chain to generate electric power for the many experiments that will benefit life on earth and our efforts in space for years to come. The entire EPS team should be very proud of reaching this major milestone in the development of the U.S. Lab."

The RPCM is a multi-channel, high power circuit breaker for the electric power system. They provide fault protection and secondary power switching as part of the overall power system. This final copy of the 40 U.S. Lab RPCMs was a Type VI RPCM with four channels and an output of 25 amps per channel. A total of 210 RPCMs will be used throughout the space station.

This delivery to Huntsville is another major milestone for the electric power system to be achieved in rapid succession as the scheduled first Space Station element launch approaches. It follows the delivery of the photovoltaic module (PV-1) integrated equipment assembly (IEA) to KSC in January, and the Z-1 truss in February. Next up: arrival of the Long Spacer at the KSC Space Station Processing Facility. In contrast to the small size of the RPCMs, all three of these elements are large components that will contribute to the space station being larger than a football field. Meanwhile, work continues on the production and testing of EPS hardware at sites throughout the country.

The first element of the International Space Station is scheduled to be launched from Russia this summer, followed immediately by the launch of the first U.S. element, Node 1. A series of flights over five years will complete the space station in December 2003. Sixteen countries are involved in the International Space Station program, including Russia, member nations in the European Space Agency, Japan, Canada and Brazil.

In addition to their responsibility for the end-to-end electric power system for the space station, Boeing teams at Rocketdyne produce the Space Shuttle Main Engine, design and develop the Linear Aerospike engine for the X-33 reusable launch vehicle (RLV) and the RS-68 engine for the Boeing Delta IV evolved expendable launch vehicle (EELV), and continue production and improvement of the RS-27A and MA-5A engines that, respectively, power the Delta and Atlas rockets. In addition, Rocketdyne is a leader in research programs for high energy lasers and electro-optical imaging systems.

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