

Boeing Delta III Inaugural Launch to Carry Commercial Satellite

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The newest addition to the Boeing [NYSE: BA] Delta rocket family will lift off here in one week, carrying a satellite for its biggest commercial customer.

The first Delta III launch, scheduled for Aug. 24 at 8:47 p.m. EDT, will deliver to orbit the Galaxy X satellite built by Hughes Space and Communications Company for PanAmSat Corporation. The satellite will provide broadcast and telecommunications coverage to all 50 states and the Caribbean.

Inaugural flights of Delta rockets have always flown live payloads rather than simulated payloads, or pathfinders, a testament to customer confidence and Delta's hallmark reliability, says Dan Collins, Boeing Delta III program director.

"We built Delta III specifically to launch commercial communications satellites," he said. "This is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate its capabilities."

Delta III uses existing components and infrastructure similar to that used with the Delta II launch vehicle, but can boost twice the payload into orbit. Featuring a larger fairing to house bigger payloads and a new single-engine cryogenically propelled upper stage, the Delta III rocket can place more than 8,400 pounds (3,818 kg) of payload into geosynchronous orbit.

"Delta III meets the needs of a growing satellite market," said Bob Cows, Boeing general manager, Commercial Delta Inc. "Satellites are getting larger to produce more revenue per satellite, and launch vehicles are getting correspondingly bigger. Delta III gives our customers the enhanced capacity they require."

Cows says the company considers Delta III an evolutionary step toward the Delta IV family, the company's entry for the U.S. Air Force Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) program, which aims to reduce space launch costs by as much as 50 percent. Boeing plans the first launch of Delta IV in 2001.

Delta III engineering, manufacturing and program management is led by Boeing Expendable Launch Systems, based in Huntington Beach, Calif., with final assembly in Pueblo, Colo. The Delta launch team at Cape Canaveral Air Station, Fla., handles launch coordination and operations. Boeing manufactures the Delta III main engine, the RS-27A, in Canoga Park, Calif.

Major Delta III suppliers include: Alliant Techsystems, Inc., Magna, Utah, strap-on solid rocket motors; Pratt & Whitney, West Palm Beach, Fla., RL10B-2 cryogenic upper-stage engine; Mitsubishi Heavy Industries of Nagoya, Japan, 13-foot (4 m) fuel tanks; and AlliedSignal, Teterboro, N.J., Redundant Inertial Flight Control Assembly avionics system.

Boeing has 18 firm contracts for Delta III launches; 13 for satellites built by Hughes Space and Communications Company.

Hughes Space and Communications International, Inc. is the world's leading manufacturer of commercial geostationary communications satellites.

PanAmSat is the world's leading commercial provider of satellite-based communications services.

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