Sea Launch To Demonstrate Launch System In March 1999

Sea Launch will demonstrate the capabilities of its ocean-based commercial launch system with its first launch in March 1999, the Company said today.

The first launch will carry a demonstration payload having the same mission and physical characteristics (weight, size, etc.) as an HS 702 commercial communications satellite. Originally, the first Sea Launch payload was to have been an HS 702, built by Hughes Space and Communications.

"We are proceeding with preparations to bring Sea Launch on line and this will be accomplished through the demonstration launch," said Allen B. Ashby, Sea Launch president, "While Sea Launch has revised its payload for the first launch, the Company is committed to meeting the requirements of its customers."

Ashby announced plans for the launch after the Odyssey arrived from Russia at the Sea Launch Home Port in Long Beach, Calif. The Odyssey is the program's self-propelled launch platform from which Sea Launch rockets will carry communication satellites into orbit from the Equatorial waters of the Pacific.

"The arrival of the launch platform at the Sea Launch Home Port is an important milestone toward the first launch because all of the program's critical hardware is in place," Ashby said at a meeting of satellite users and builders in Orlando, Fla. "With the success of the demonstration launch, our current and prospective customers will be able to track our progress and benefit from the data."

Sea Launch uses a Ukrainian- and Russian-built rocket, the Norwegian-built floating launch platform and an Assembly and Command ship the Sea Launch Commander, also based at the Home Port. Sea Launch currently has a manifest of 18 firm launch contracts signed to date through the year 2004.

The Sea Launch Company is a joint venture of The Boeing Company (40%), RSC-Energia of Moscow (25%), KB Yuzhnoye/PO Yuzhmash of Ukraine (15%) and Kvaerner Maritime of Norway (20%).

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