

Boeing Airborne Satellite Television System Debuts At National Business Aviation Convention

The Boeing Airborne Satellite Television System was successfully demonstrated Oct. 19-21 to an international audience attending the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) convention in Las Vegas.

On hand at the Boeing exhibit was a large static display touting the capabilities of the versatile "office in the sky" concept developed by the Boeing Aviation Information Services (AIS) program. In addition, live demonstrations of the service - including link-up with broadcast-satellite service provider DIRECTV - also were conducted during the three-day event. The demonstration involved displaying four independent simultaneous outputs - three video and one audio -- for visitors to assess.

The association comprises approximately 4,500 member companies that own or support more than 6,000 general aviation aircraft used for business activities. Approximately 32,000 people visited the 3,260 booths at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Business-jet aircraft also were on display at nearby McCarran International Airport, including the first Boeing Business Jet aircraft.

The information-communication system developed by AIS is based on phased-array antenna technology developed by Boeing. It allows business travelers access to a variety of live television and business data, including stock-market reports and financial news. The 1,500-element antenna is novel in design and approach: it is only 1.2-inch thick, 2 feet by 3 feet in size and is electronically steered to allow instantaneous connections between satellites and mobile platforms.

The Boeing system has been successfully operated on both civilian and military aircraft, including a Boeing 757 executive jet and U.S. Air Force airborne early warning system KC-135 and C-135 avionics testbed aircraft.

"We are delighted to have had the convention as the venue for the public introduction of our system," said Livingston Holder, AIS program manager.

"I think our potential customers realize we have the capability to provide a lot more than TV, just as we've demonstrated with our military customers. We are looking forward to broadening our exposure and informing our potential customers of our full range of capabilities."

This fall, Boeing demonstrated the system's video and data services using high-bandwidth satellite-receive capability at the Air Force Expeditionary Force Experiment - EFX '98 - "live-fly" exercise at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. Data to the aircraft en route was received nearly as fast as one would expect for office network connections. This capability opens new opportunities for the military to meet their command and control requirements.

The Boeing Airborne Satellite Television System has offered uninterrupted service since first being installed in November 1996 on the Boeing 757 executive jet. Its designers say the system has proven its value to potential customers due to its reliability, easy installation, preventative-free maintenance, aerodynamic "no-moving-parts" design and lower operating costs.

The AIS system now is being offered to executive jet owners, military and government customers.
