Boeing Delta III Launch to Carry Orion 3 Satellite

The newest addition to the Boeing Delta rocket family will lift off here in less than a week, carrying the Hughes-built Orion 3 satellite for Loral Space & Communications.

A Boeing [NYSE: BA] Delta III rocket, scheduled for launch at 9:14 p.m. EDT, April 5, from Space Launch Complex 17, will place the Orion 3 satellite into orbit. The launch window extends through 10:23 p.m. EDT.

Weighing 9,480 pounds (4,300 kg), Orion 3 is the largest payload ever to be launched to geosynchronous transfer orbit by a Delta launch vehicle.

The Orion 3 satellite will expand the C-band and Ku-band coverage area of Loral's satellite service fleet to include the entire Asia-Pacific region including Korea, China, Japan, Australia, India, Southeast Asia, Oceania and Hawaii.

The launch marks the return to flight of the Delta III, after its Aug. 28, 1998, inaugural flight carrying the Galaxy X satellite was cut short approximately one minute and 20 seconds into flight. During the investigation that followed, the failure was determined to be caused by a roll mode not accounted for in the control system.

"Although we recognize the significance of this launch as the return to flight for Delta III, our No. 1 priority is supporting our customers and ensuring the success of their mission," said Jay Witzling, vice president, Delta II and Titan programs.

"We're looking forward to a successful launch that will advance our customers' goals and objectives while showing the world that the Delta III program is back on track," he said.

Delta III, featuring a larger fairing to house bigger payloads and a new cryogenically propelled upper stage with a Pratt & Whitney-built single-engine, uses existing components and infrastructure similar to that used with the Delta II launch vehicle, but can boost twice the payload into orbit.

Boeing has 17 firm contracts for Delta III launches; 12 for satellites built by Hughes Space and Communications Company, which includes the Orion 3 satellite, and five launches for Space Systems/Loral. The company considers Delta III an evolutionary step toward the Delta IV family of launch vehicles. 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.

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

Loral Space & Communications is a high technology company that primarily concentrates on satellite manufacturing and satellite-based services, including transponder leasing and value-added services, domestic and international corporate data networks, global wireless telephony, broadband data transmission and content services, Internet services, and international direct-to-home satellite services. For more information about Loral, visit Loral's Internet site at: (www.loral.com).

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Visit our Delta home page at: (www.boeing.com/delta).

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