Boeing Launches NASA's Landsat 7 from California, Announces Florida Launch Schedule for April, May

Scientists studying changes in the global environment will be aided by the latest in a series of NASA Earth-imaging satellites carried into orbit aboard a Boeing [NYSE: BA] Delta II rocket.

Scheduled for launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., at 11:32 a.m. PDT April 15, the Delta II will boost NASA's Landsat 7 spacecraft into orbit more than 400 miles above the Earth. There will be a two-minute window of opportunity for the launch.

Scientists use Landsat satellites to gather remotely-sensed images of the land surface and surrounding coastal regions for global change research, regional environmental change studies, national security uses as well as civil and commercial purposes. Landsat 7 is a joint program with NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

"Boeing is proud to continue its role as the launch provider for NASA on one-of-a-kind scientific and technology development missions since 1961," said Darryl Van Dorn, Boeing director of commercial and NASA Delta programs. "Landsat 7 will be the seventh NASA-sponsored payload launched aboard a Delta rocket in the past eight months," Van Dorn noted.

On Feb. 23, a Delta II carried the Ærsted satellite for Denmark and SUNSAT satellite for South Africa, which were NASA-sponsored secondary payloads on the U.S. Air Force ARGOS launch. Earlier this year Boeing successfully launched Mars Polar Lander and SEDSAT, and Stardust for NASA.

During 1998, Deep Space 1 and SEDSAT, and Mars Climate Orbiter began their missions into the Solar System aboard Delta II rockets.

The Landsat 7 mission is a collaborative effort between NASA, USGS and industry partners Lockheed Martin Missiles and Space, Valley Forge, Penn., contractor for the spacecraft bus, and Raytheon Systems Company, Santa Barbara, Calif., for the eight-band multispecteral scanning radiometer which will provide high-resolution imaging information.

At Cape Canaveral Air Station, Fla., the Delta III launch team has announced the next launch opportunity for the Orion 3 communications satellite is Wed., April 21.

The launch window spans from 9:02 p.m. to 10:11 p.m. EDT. This is the third launch attempt of the Boeing Delta III carrying Orion 3 for Hughes Space and Communications.

Loral Space & Communications will own and operate the Hughes-built satellite. 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.

As a result of the new launch date for the Orion 3 spacecraft, the next two Delta II launches from Space Launch Complex 17 also have been rescheduled. The new date for the Delta II launch carrying a U.S. Air Force Global Positioning System Satellite is May 4, while the launch of NASA's Far Ultraviolet Spectrogram Explorer or FUSE spacecraft has been moved to May 27.

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