Boeing Named SkyBridge Strategic Launch Service Provider, Receives Orders for Delta III and Delta IV Rockets

The Boeing Company has been named the strategic launch service provider for the SkyBridge constellation, moving Boeing one step closer to becoming the world's leading launch services provider.

Alcatel of Paris, France, prime contractor for the SkyBridge limited partnership, has contracted Boeing to launch 40 SkyBridge satellites -- half the 80 satellites in the planned constellation -- on a combination of Delta launch vehicles beginning in 2002. Alcatel joins Loral Space & Communications and the U.S. Air Force as customers for Boeing Delta IV.

The agreement calls for Boeing to provide two Delta III vehicles, each to carry four satellites, and four Delta IV Medium+ (5,4) vehicles, each to carry eight satellites. Also included in the contract are options for additional launch services as required by SkyBridge.

The Expendable Launch Services business unit of Boeing will manage all tasks associated with launch services on Delta vehicles from development of two customized SkyBridge satellite dispensers to final satellite separation.

SkyBridge's 80 low-Earth orbiting satellites will provide high-speed multi-media transmission services to business and residential users worldwide. SkyBridge plans a full service deployment in 2003.

"Boeing is proud of its association with SkyBridge, which represents an impressive team of limited partners from around the globe," said Jim Albaugh, president of Boeing Space and Communications. "Our growing manifest is reassurance that Delta is continuing to evolve to meet the needs of the global satellite community."

The Delta family of rockets has been built and launched since 1960. Since then, Delta vehicles have flown more than 275 missions.

Boeing has been the cornerstone launch provider for three global satellite constellations -- the U.S. Air Force Global Positioning System, the Iridium system and Globalstar. From 1989 to 1993, Delta rockets were used to launch the entire GPS system; Delta launched 55 Iridium satellites within 15 months; and most recently, Delta launched 24 Globalstar telecommunications satellites in a little more than 18 months.

"We've built a strong reputation in the launch service industry, in part from our work with emerging constellations," said Gale Schluter, vice president and general manager of Boeing Expendable Launch Systems. "We are honored to be a part of the SkyBridge project."

SkyBridge LP is a Delaware Limited Partnership headquartered in Bethesda, Md. Alcatel is prime contractor for the SkyBridge system. Other companies in the limited partnership include: Loral Space & Communication and EMS Technologies of the United States; Mitsubishi Electric Corporation, Sharp Corporation, and Toshiba Corporation, Japan; COM DEV International, Canada; THOMSON multimedia, CNES (Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales) and SNECMA, France; SRIW (Societe Regionale d'Investissement de Wallonie), Belgium.

The Boeing Company, based in Seattle, Wash., employs more than 230,000 and is the largest aerospace company in the world as measured by total sales. The company's international operations are divided into three major business units: Commercial Airplanes, Military Aircraft and Missile Systems, and Space and Communications.

Boeing Expendable Launch Systems, based in Huntington Beach, Calif., produces and provides marketing and launch operations for the Delta launch vehicle family under the Space and Communications business unit.

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