Sea Launch Sets Sail for Second Commercial Mission

The Sea Launch Commander and the Odyssey Launch Platform departed the Sea Launch Home Port in Long Beach Harbor on February 27, for the Sea Launch Company's second commercial satellite launch, planned for March 12.

The 200-foot Zenit-3SL launch vehicle will lift a 6,050 lb. (2,750 kg.) ICO F-1 mobile communications satellite, built by Hughes Space & Communications Company in El Segundo, Calif., into Middle Earth Orbit, about 6,400 miles (10,350 kilometers) from Earth. This spacecraft is to be the first in a series of global communications satellites for ICO Global Communications, a global mobile communications company based in London.

The launch is scheduled precisely at 6:49 a.m. (Pacific Time), on March 12, from a launch site situated 1,400 miles southeast of Hawaii.

"We are excited to send off our two vessels for this first mission of the year," said Bohdan Bejmuk, vice president and general manager of the Sea Launch Home Port. "We now look forward to our next launch in two weeks. We are delighted to be the first launch provider for the ICO system of global satellites."

Sea Launch begins 2000 with a two-for-two launch success record, including a successful demonstration launch in March 1999, and an equally successful first commercial launch in October 1999. The "bull's eye" accuracy of these launches proved the reliability of the system, the performance of the rocket and the extraordinary teamwork of the international Sea Launch partnership.

During the 11-day transit to the launch site, the Sea Launch expendable launch vehicle is positioned horizontally at the top of the self-propelled launch platform in an environmentally controlled hangar. Upon arrival at the launch site, located at the equator, 154 degrees West Longitude, the 20-story high launch platform will be ballasted to its launch depth and oriented to minimize wind and wave effects. A day before liftoff, the rocket will be rolled out of the hangar and automatically erected to a vertical position on the launch pad.

Prior to the departure from Home Port, Sea Launch and Hughes personnel conducted an extensive series of tests and launch-readiness activities. These included encapsulation of the ICO F-1 satellite within the fairing, and transfer of the spacecraft from the payload processing facility to the Sea Launch Commander. Once on board the Commander, the team mated the payload unit with the three-stage rocket. With that accomplished, the integrated vehicle was then transferred to the Launch Platform for transit to the launch site.

Building on proven performance and flight-tested hardware, Sea Launch combines the world's premier aerospace and marine expertise to provide satellite and end-user customers with superior value, performance and fully integrated commercial launch service capabilities. The Zenit-3SL rocket, configured to enhance reliability and meet the program's performance objectives, is currently capable of delivering 11,000 lbs. (5,250 kg) to geostationary transfer orbit. Sea Launch has 19 firm launches on its current manifest, including the ICO mission.

Sea Launch provides commercial satellite customers with the most direct and cost-effective route to orbit, without requiring a change in flight inclination. Launching from the equator offers value-added operational benefits, including increased performance, high launch availability and reduced launch infrastructure costs. From the ocean-based launch site, the robust Sea Launch Zenit-3SL rocket can lift a heavier spacecraft mass or place a payload into a higher perigee, enhancing the lifespan of satellite service capability.

The Sea Launch international partnership includes:

- Boeing Commercial Space Company of Kent, Wash. -- spacecraft integration and the payload accommodations, and management of overall Home Port operations
- The Anglo-Norwegian Kvaerner Group of Oslo, Norway -- marine engineering and operations
- RSC Energia of Moscow, Russia -- Block-DM upper stage and its integration with the launch vehicle
- KB Yuzhnoye/PO Yuzhmash of Ukraine -- first two stages of the launch vehicle and launch support operations

For updated information on the ICO launch, please call the Sea Launch Hotline at 562.797.1000. For more information about the company and its services, visit the Sea Launch website at: http://www.boeing.com/sealaunch/

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