Boeing Stresses Quality Management, Engineering Accountability to Space Suppliers

The leaders of the Boeing space transportation businesses met with their top 150 suppliers to discuss the results of the Boeing Mission Assurance Review (BMAR) and its findings in terms of supplier expectations.

The BMAR, which was chaired by Dr. Sheila Widnall, former Secretary of the Air Force and Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor, was chartered by Boeing to review the company's expendable launch vehicle programs and make recommendations to improve mission success.

The review board recommended that Boeing increase its focus on launch vehicle quality in every phase, from design through manufacturing to operations, in the belief that a strong quality-first focus will lead to increased reliability at reduced cost. Other recommendations were made in areas such as systems engineering, engineering accountability, supplier management, flight instrumentation and post-flight analysis.

Boeing Space and Communications Group is implementing the BMAR findings across its businesses, according to Peter Ross, director of Supplier Management for Boeing Space and Communications Group. Expendable Launch Systems and Reusable Space Systems are the first business segments to specifically address the concerns raised by the BMAR committee.

Some of the critical BMAR recommendations are:

- Quality must be the company's highest priority
- As part of system engineering, increase emphasis on horizontal integration across vehicle subsystems and organizational elements
- Modify internal procedures to require "closure" (understanding and intent) between design engineering and manufacturing
- Ensure that a formal procedure exists to evaluate the need for re-qualification of flight-critical elements after design changes
- Require suppliers of flight-critical hardware to implement the same management and configuration control disciplines that Boeing uses as vehicle integrator
- Increase emphasis on failure risk management and independent reviews
- Clarify responsibility and accountability within program organizations including certification of component and system responsible engineers

From the BMAR recommendations, Boeing established a mandatory certification program for all suppliers of flight-critical launch vehicle hardware. Certification requires training and quality improvements, which will be reviewed as part of the process. Suppliers are required to complete the certification process by December 31, 2000. "To become BMAR certified, we are asking our suppliers to help us address the concerns raised by the BMAR committee," Ross said. "The intent is not to make it more difficult to work with Boeing, but to manage our supply chain consistently."

###

20-008

www.boeing.com/delta

For further information:

Boeing Communications
(714) 896-1301

Boeing Launch Hotline
(714) 896-4770