Sea Launch Vessels Depart for Launch Site

In preparation for the launch of the PAS-9 satellite on July 28, the *Odyssey* Launch Platform departed yesterday at 6pm (PDT) from the Sea Launch Home Port in Long Beach, Calif. The *Sea Launch Commander* will depart on July 16.

The vessels will travel approximately 3,000 miles to the launch site, located in the Pacific Ocean on the equator, at 154 degrees West Longitude. Upon arrival, the Sea Launch team will initiate a 72-hour countdown in preparation for the 3:42 pm (PDT) liftoff.

This is the fourth mission for Sea Launch. The demonstration launch in March 1999, and first commercial launch of the DIRECTV 1-R broadcast satellite in October, successfully validated the program concept and demonstrated overall system capability. On the third mission in March 2000, an anomaly developed during the second stage flight and the mission was terminated. Following a thorough investigation of the failure, Sea Launch implemented corrective actions and immediately began preparations for the launch of the PAS-9 communications satellite.

"All the members of the Sea Launch partnership are confident we have made every effort to ensure the success of this mission," said Will Trafton, president of Sea Launch. "Our team has grown as a result of our unfortunate experience in March and our understanding and our processes strengthened. We appreciate the confidence the customer community has shown in us and fully intend to meet our commitments to them."

The 200-foot Zenit-3SL launch vehicle will lift the 8,000 lb. (3,650 kg.) satellite, built by Hughes Space & Communications Company, into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit. At the time of spacecraft separation, the PanAmSat satellite will be about 2,100 miles above the Indian Ocean, on its way to a Geostationary Orbit at 22,500 miles from Earth. It will provide broadcast and general communications services in C- and Ku-band for the Americas, the Caribbean and western Europe. PAS-9 will replace PAS-5 at 58 degrees West Longitude.

The launch is currently planned for July 28, with a launch window that opens at 3:42 pm (PDT). 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. A day before liftoff, the rocket will be rolled out of the hangar and automatically erected to a vertical position on the launch pad.

Sea Launch provides commercial satellite customers with the most direct and cost-effective route to orbit. Sea Launch offers value-added operational benefits, including increased performance, high launch availability and reduced launch infrastructure costs. From its equatorial 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.

For more information, visit the Sea Launch page at http://www.sea-launch.com

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