Boeing Minuteman III Guidance Replacement Program Achieves Operational Capability Milestone

The U.S. Air Force has announced that the Boeing [NYSE:BA] Minuteman III Guidance Replacement Program has achieved the Initial Operational Capability requirement (IOC). The IOC criteria require a minimum of 720 strategic alert operational hours each for 10 Minuteman Missile Guidance Sets and four support sets. More than 25,000 cumulative operational hours have been achieved since the first operational Missile Guidance Set was deployed in Aug. 1999 at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Great Falls, Mont. Boeing produces the Missile Guidance Sets as part of the Minuteman III Guidance Replacement Program. IOC was officially achieved on July 20..

"The Minuteman III is a major element in our nation's strategic triad. The performance of the Boeing guidance system and the achievement of initial operational capability is a major milestone in maintaining this critical strategic deterrent," said Allen B. Ashby, vice president & general manager, Boeing Electronic Systems & Missile Defense.

The Guidance Replacement Program (GRP) was awarded its first Full Rate Production contract in Dec. 1999. The next contract, expected in December of this year, will bring the total number of systems in production to 228. A total of 652 units are required to support 500 operationally fielded Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles.

"Achievement of the production IOC milestone is the latest accomplishment by the GRP government and industry team," said Debra Rub, GRP program director. "The outstanding, failure-free performance of our fielded GRP hardware indicates that we are well ahead of the required system performance levels. I am proud of our team and their outstanding accomplishments."

Missile guidance set production is performed at Boeing's El Paso, Texas, facility and at Honeywell's Clearwater, Fla., facility. Honeywell is a major program subcontractor.

The Minuteman III Guidance Replacement Program objective is to replace aging guidance system electronics to maintain in-flight and weapon system reliability, as well as system supportability, beyond the year 2020. Boeing has been involved in ICBM development design, production and maintenance since the Minuteman I was conceptualized in 1958. In addition to the Guidance Replacement Program, Boeing hosts ICBM repair activities at the Boeing Guidance Repair Center, Heath, Ohio; and is a team member on ICBM Prime.

Electronic Systems & Missile Defense, a part of the Boeing Space and Communications Group, provides products and services to customers in its addressed markets, including strategic missiles, missile defense systems, precision navigation products, as well as electronic and sensor systems. ES&MD employs approximately 6,000 people at locations nationwide, including Anaheim, Calif.; El Paso, Texas; Heath, Ohio; Huntsville, Ala.; Ogden, Utah; and Seattle, Wash.

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