Boeing Delta III Rocket to Fly Data Gathering Mission

A Boeing Delta III is scheduled to lift off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., on Aug. 23, carrying a simulated payload on a dual data gathering mission. The four-hour launch window opens at 7 a.m. EDT.

The 9,480-pound payload is equipped with instruments to measure vibration response and will be used to further validate Boeing baseline data on launch vehicle performance. In addition, the simulated payload has been painted with alternating black and white stripes and has reflective material installed to support the U.S. Air Force and University of Colorado satellite studies.

"We are committed to a successful Delta III launch," said Gale Schluter, vice president-general manager of Boeing Expendable Launch Systems.

"The last Delta III mission was flown to completion," Schluter added. "By choosing to fly the same flight profile, we will be able to use the baseline data from the last flight for comparison with the upcoming mission."

Designated DM-F3 for Delta Mission-Flight 3, the payload is designed to match the mass and frequency characteristics of common commercial communication satellites sized for Delta III. Boeing engineers will gather data on the interaction of the payload with the vehicle and further verify performance.

Earlier this year, details of this mission were announced after Boeing completed discussions with potential customers, but was unable to match schedule requirements. The decision to launch a simulated payload was made to maximize the market potential of Delta III and Delta IV launch services.

Delta III was designed to address the growing size of commercial satellites. As a transitional vehicle to the Delta IV family of rockets, it can carry to geosynchronous transfer orbit up to 8,400 pounds (3,800 kg) twice the payload of the Delta II.

Delta III features a new cryogenically-propelled upper stage with a Pratt & Whitney-built single engine. The vehicle uses existing components and infrastructure similar to that used with the Delta II rocket.

Delta III engineering, manufacturing and program management are led by Boeing Expendable Launch Systems based in Huntington Beach, with final assembly in Pueblo, Colo. The Delta launch team at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla. handles launch coordination and operations. Boeing manufactures the Delta III main engine, the RS-27A, in Canoga Park, Calif.

Major Delta III suppliers include: Alliant Techsystems, Inc., Magna, Utah, strap-on solid rocket motors; Pratt & Whitney, West Palm Beach, Fla., RL10B-2 cryogenic upper-stage engine; Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Nagoya, Japan, 13-foot (4-meter) fuel tanks; and L3 communications, Teterboro, N.J., Redundant Inertial Flight Control Assembly avionics system.

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Boeing Delta Web Site: www.boeing.com/delta

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