Boeing Delta II Rocket Lifts Air Force Navigational Satellite into Orbit

A Global Positioning System (GPS) navigational satellite was placed into an elliptical orbit almost 11,000 miles above the Earth today by a Boeing [NYSE: BA] Delta II rocket at 12:14 p.m. EST.

The satellite is the 33rd in the U.S. Air Force GPS system to be lifted into orbit aboard a Delta II.

"Today's successful launch is a part of a 26-year Boeing association with the GPS program," noted Will Hampton, director, Air Force Delta programs. In 1974, the company was awarded contracts to build developmental satellites and receiver sets, and in 1987 won a contract to launch GPS satellites.

"Over the years, Boeing has worked closely as a partner with the Air Force to ensure mission success," Hampton said. "Boeing continues this partnership as the launch provider for GPS, and is also working on the design, development, and production of the third generation of satellites."

Recognized as the premier satellite navigational system, GPS operates via a constellation of 28 operational satellites, a ground control system, and thousands of terminals to help locate and guide military and civilian users in the air, at sea, on the ground, and in space.

Since 1960, the Delta family of launch vehicles has increased its payload capacity from 100 pounds to 8,400 pounds to geosynchronous transfer orbit with the Delta III.

From Delta II and Delta III, the technological evolution continues with development the Delta IV for the Air Force Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle Program (EELV). Delta IV is offered as a family of launch vehicles, which includes five variants capable of lifting between 9,285 pounds to 28,950 pounds to geosynchronous transfer orbit.

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Boeing Delta Web Site

For further information:
Keith Takahashi
(714) 896-1302
Boeing Communications
(714) 896-1301
Boeing Launch Hotline
(714) 896-4770