Boeing Delta II Selected to Place NOAA-N Satellite into Polar Orbit

Boeing [NYSE:BA] officials announced that NASA has exercised a launch service contract option for a Delta II rocket to launch a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Earth-observing satellite in early 2003.

The NOAA-N satellite will be placed into a polar orbit aboard a Delta II expendable launch vehicle to be launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

NOAA-N will take images and measurements of the Earth's atmosphere, cloud cover and surface. It will also monitor proton and electron fluxes near the Earth's atmosphere to assess the effects of solar radiation levels on Earth as well as on astronauts in orbit.

"This decision by NASA marks the first new scientific mission announced this year for a Delta II," said Joy Bryant, director of NASA Launch Services for Boeing. "Boeing is pleased to continue the tradition of success providing the reliable Delta II vehicle for NASA critical payloads. NOAA-N will provide data that is extremely vital in measuring the current and future activity of our atmosphere. The intrinsic value of the data provided by this satellite, and the need for launch call-up capability are a perfect match for the Delta II, which is known as the workhorse of the industry."

In addition to its atmospheric monitoring functions, NOAA-N is capable of receiving, processing and re-transmitting data from free-floating balloons, buoys and remote automatic observation stations around the world. The satellite can also re-transmit distress signals for search and rescue efforts on Earth.

The NOAA-N launch is part of an existing Delta II MED-LITE launch service contract that NASA awarded Boeing in 1996. NOAA-N is a cooperative effort between NOAA, NASA, the United Kingdom and France.

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

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For further information:
Robert Villanueva
(714) 372-2089

Boeing Communications
(714) 896-1301

Boeing Launch Hotline
(714) 896-4770