U.S. Air Force Assigns Fifth Delta IV Launch

Boeing [NYSE: BA] officials announced today that the U.S. Air Force has called up its fifth Delta IV launch.

The launch for the Defense Satellite Program, identified as DSP-23, is scheduled for late August 2003 aboard the second Delta IV Heavy mission. The other four Air Force Delta IV missions include a Defense Satellite Communications System launch scheduled for June 2002, a Delta IV Heavy demonstration in late 2002, a mission for the National Reconnaissance Office in March 2003, and a Defense Meteorological Satellite Program satellite scheduled for launch in June 2003. In all, the Air Force has contracted with Boeing for 22 Delta IV missions.

"The DSP launch in late August 2003 is another positive sign of the Air Force's confidence in the Delta IV program," said Dan Collins, vice president and program manager, Boeing Delta programs. This will be the second Delta IV Heavy mission and will follow the Air Force funded Delta IV Heavy demonstration flight scheduled for late 2002.

"Officials waited to assign the DSP-23 mission until we had successfully demonstrated the RS-68 engine's capabilities," Collins said. "The progress we've made with the engine over the past three months has enabled our customer to move out and order this mission."

The five Delta IV variants include the Delta IV Medium, Delta IV Heavy, and three Delta IV Medium Plus versions that are designated by the size of fairing and number of solid rockets used. The Delta IV family of rockets is capable of launching payloads to geosynchronous transfer orbit between 4,000 and 13,000 kilograms. Currently Boeing has a backlog of more than 40 Delta IV missions.

For more information see the Boeing Delta website.

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