Boeing Delta II Rocket to Help NASA Map the Universe

A Boeing [NYSE:BA] Delta II rocket is set to thunder into space to help NASA seek answers to some fundamental questions about the universe.

The Delta II will launch the Microwave Anisotropy Probe (MAP) from Space Launch Complex 17B at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla. on June 30 at 3:46:46 p.m. EDT. The launch window will last 12 minutes.

To accommodate the payload requirements, Boeing will use a 10-foot composite fairing on a three-stage rocket for the very first time.

"This launch demonstrates the flexibility of the Delta II rocket to meet our customers' needs with varying capabilities and interfaces while providing the same demonstrated reliability time after time," said Joy Bryant, Boeing director of NASA expendable launch program. "It also demonstrates our continuing commitment to NASA's space exploration efforts."

The MAP mission is managed by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md. Its goal is to address five fundamental questions in cosmology:

1. Will the universe expand forever or will it eventually collapse?
2. Is the universe dominated by exotic dark matter?
3. What is the shape of the universe?
4. How and when did the first galaxies form?
5. Is the expansion of the universe accelerating?

To answer these questions MAP will produce an accurate full-sky map of the cosmic microwave background temperature fluctuations with high sensitivity and angular resolution.

The Boeing Delta II 7425-10 rocket features the Boeing-built Rocketdyne RS-27 main engine and four solid rocket motors (SRM). The SRMs will separate from the first stage at 68 seconds after liftoff. The spacecraft will be released into space at approximately 86 minutes after liftoff.

The Boeing Company is the largest aerospace company in the world and the United States' leading exporter. It is the world's largest NASA contractor and the largest manufacturer of commercial jetliners and military aircraft. The company's capabilities in aerospace also include rotorcraft, electronic and defense systems, missiles, rocket engines, launch vehicles, and advanced information and communication systems. The company has an extensive global reach with customers in 145 countries and manufacturing operations throughout the United States, Canada and Australia.

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

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