First DIRECTV Spot Beam Satellite Shipped for Late November Launch

DIRECTV, Inc., a unit of Hughes Electronics Corporation, and Boeing Satellite Systems announced today that DIRECTV-4S, a new high-power spot beam satellite, has been shipped to the Guiana Space Center in Kourou, French Guiana and is scheduled for launch on Nov. 26.

A Boeing 601HP, DIRECTV-4S is the first spacecraft in the DIRECTV fleet to use highly focused spot beam technology that will provide DIRECTV with the capacity to deliver more than 300 additional local channels to its 41 local channel markets. The new satellite enables DIRECTV to meet the "must carry" requirements of the Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act that take effect on Jan. 1, 2002.

The satellite will be carried into space by an Ariane 4 launch vehicle and is expected to be ready for service by late December at 101 degrees West Longitude (WL), the primary orbital slot for DIRECTV. DIRECTV-4S will be the sixth satellite in the DIRECTV fleet that now includes three satellites at its 101-degree slot, one at 110 degrees WL and another at 119 degrees WL.

"The launch of DIRECTV-4S will begin a new and important chapter in our evolution as a television programming service. It will benefit our existing customers and enhance our prospects for continued growth," said Roxanne Austin, president and COO, DIRECTV, Inc. "Through the new satellite's spot beam technology, we will substantially expand the number of local channels we offer in each of the 41 DIRECTV local channel markets representing more than 61 percent of the television homes in the United States."

Boeing Satellite Systems President Randy Brinkley said, "DIRECTV-4S is the fifth Boeing-built spacecraft in the DIRECTV fleet and, with its five large reflectors and spot beam payload, it is also the most technologically sophisticated spacecraft we've built to deliver direct-to-home television services."

"We are proud to provide DIRECTV with this satellite, which will help DIRECTV to compete more effectively against cable for customers in its local channel markets throughout the United States," he added.

The 5,733-pound satellite will carry a spot beam payload of 38 active transponders, two active national transponders and eight supplemental national transponders. The spacecraft has a designed service life of approximately 15 years.

DIRECTV is the nation's leading digital satellite television service provider with more than 10.3 million customers. DIRECTV and the Cyclone Design logo are trademarks of DIRECTV, Inc., a unit of Hughes Electronics Corp. HUGHES is the world's leading provider of digital television entertainment, broadband services, satellite-based private business networks, and global video and data broadcasting. The earnings of HUGHES, a unit of General Motors Corporation, are used to calculate the earnings per share attributable to the General Motors Class H common stock (NYSE: GMH).

Boeing Space and Communications is the world's leading manufacturer of commercial communications satellites, and is also a major provider of space systems, satellites, and payloads for national defense, science and environmental applications.
The Boeing Company is the largest aerospace company in the world and the United States' leading exporter. It is NASA's largest 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, satellites, and advanced information and communication systems. The company has an extensive global reach with customers in 145 countries.
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