Successful Launch For 2 Boeing-Built Satellites

A successful rocket launch today sent a pair of Boeing-built communications satellites into orbit for two long-time customers of Boeing Space and Communications (S&C), a unit of The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA]. The satellites - a Boeing 601 model built for JSAT Corporation of Tokyo and a Boeing 376HP model built for SES ASTRA of Luxembourg - were orbited by Arianespace aboard an Ariane 44L rocket from the Guiana Space Center on the northeast coast of South America.

Liftoff occurred at 10:29 p.m. at the launch site (5:29 p.m. PST; 1:29 a.m. March 29 GMT). Initial signals were received from both satellites about three hours later, confirming that systems are operating normally.

Both satellites were built in El Segundo, Calif., by Boeing Satellite Systems, the satellite manufacturing arm of Boeing S&C. JCSAT-8 is the fifth Boeing 601 and the seventh Boeing spacecraft for the JSAT fleet. ASTRA 3A is the second Boeing 376 and the tenth Boeing satellite built for SES ASTRA.

"This launch illustrated the diversity of our product line, as shown by the fact that our number-one and number-two top-selling spacecraft models were both aboard," said Randy Brinkley, president of Boeing Satellite Systems. "And because delivering two unrelated satellites at the same time is such a unique challenge, this launch was also a testament to the abilities of our team. Congratulations to our customers and to everyone else involved in this success."

JCSAT-8 will provide coverage to Japan, East Asia, Oceania and Hawaii from the orbital slot of 154 degrees East longitude.

ASTRA 3A will augment the existing SES ASTRA fleet of 12 spacecraft to help meet growing demand for digital satellite services. to the German-speaking markets of Germany, Austria and Switzerland from the 23.5 degrees East orbital slot.

JSAT is a leading satellite operator in the Asia-Pacific region. The company owns and operates eight satellites in seven orbital slots. JSAT provides communications and broadcasting services that offer a range of unique features made possible by satellite communications, which is well suited to support the high-volume, wide-distribution, high-speed networks.

The ASTRA Satellite System is Europe's leading analogue and digital satellite television broadcast system. At the end of 2000, ASTRA served approximately 86% of all European satellite and cable homes. ASTRA is owned and operated by SES ASTRA, a wholly owned subsidiary of SES GLOBAL, the world's premier satellite operator.

Boeing Space and Communications (S&C), headquartered in Seal Beach, Calif., is the world's largest space and communications company. A unit of The Boeing Company, S&C provides integrated solutions in launch services, human space flight and exploration, missile defense, and information and communications. It is NASA's largest contractor; a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; and a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. The global enterprise has customers worldwide and manufacturing operations throughout the United States and Australia.

TextNOTE TO EDITORS: Photos of the ASTRA 3A and JCSAT-8 spacecraft are available upon request or can be downloaded from Boeing Media.

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