Boeing Completes Major Design Milestone for Wedgetail Radar

The Boeing Company's [NYSE: BA] successful completion of the critical design review of the state-of- the-art radar and identification friend or foe subsystems for Australia's Project Wedgetail clears the way to build the systems' parts and components.

Wedgetail is a 737 airborne early warning & control (AEW&C) system providing airborne surveillance and command and control capability. The Commonwealth of Australia awarded Boeing Space and Communications (S&C), a unit of The Boeing Company, a contract worth more than $1 billion dollars for four 737 AEW&C systems plus options for up to three other systems. Boeing expects to deliver the first two aircraft in 2006.

The review was completed on schedule and confirmed that the detailed design developed by Boeing S&C teammate Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems is producible, supportable, maintainable and will yield the required performance characteristics. Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems, under subcontract to Boeing, is building the radar parts at its facility in Baltimore, Md. Testing of the first Multi-role Electronically Scanned Array (MESA) radar will begin in August this year.

"The design is maturing according to our predictions. We're confident we'll be able to deliver a system meeting the performance features that give the 737 AEW&C system its full military utility," said Henry Gratrix, Boeing Wedgetail Airborne Mission System manager.

Boeing and Northrop Grumman also examined the interfaces between the design elements of the radar and between the radar subsystem and the other aircraft and mission system elements to make sure the radar/identification, friend or foe (IFF) subsystem will function properly within the entire airborne mission system.

"I'm pleased to see all elements of this program coming together on time," said Air Vice Marshal Norm Gray of the Australian Defence Project Authority. "The Radar/IFF, as the primary sensor, is critical to our capability and this design review has certainly served its purpose in providing the level of confidence required to move forward."

The MESA radar/IFF is the critical sensor aboard the 737 AEW&C. The electronically scanned array is designed to provide optimal performance in range, tracking and accuracy. The radar is able to track air and sea targets simultaneously and can help the operator maintain control of high-performance aircraft while continuously scanning the operational area.

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.

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