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The U.S. Air Force's Electronic Systems Center (ESC) at Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., recently announced The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] as prime contractor for a six-year, \$273 million contract to design and develop the first increment of wideband satellite communications terminals for a transformational Department of Defense initiative known as the Family of Advanced Beyond Line-of-Sight Terminals (FAB-T).

FAB-T is intended to provide strategic forces with a multi-mission capable family of terminals -- or radio systems with special purpose antennas -- that utilize a common design, open system architecture to talk to different satellites and enable information exchange between ground, air and space platforms. The initiative represents a key building block in Boeing's vision of the integrated battlespace of the future, where networked information and communications' systems provide a competitive edge to decision-makers and military personnel.

The selection of Boeing to lead FAB-T, coupled with the recent Joint Tactical Radio System (JTRS) Cluster 1 and Future Combat Systems (FCS) contract awards, further solidifies Boeing's leadership position in the integrated battlespace, estimated to be a \$200 billion addressable market over the next decade, said Allen Ashby, vice president and general manager of Boeing's Battle Management/Command, Control and Communications (BMC3) and Strategic Systems business unit in Anaheim, Calif., where FAB-T program activities will be managed. The Anaheim unit is part of Air Force Systems, a principal business area within the newly formed Boeing Integrated Defense Systems operating group, headquartered in St. Louis, Mo.

"Today's win further exemplifies the validity of Boeing's network-centric strategy, as well as the company's corporate commitment to providing integrated solutions to our government customers and to making Air Force transformation a reality," said George Muellner, senior vice president and general manager of Air Force Systems. "The Boeing team represents a natural alliance of industry leaders who are well-poised to deliver a best value, low-risk systems solution that will dramatically improve satellite communications of the future."

The winning proposal features a flexible system architecture design developed by Boeing that can network the battlespace, accommodate terminal upgrades and meet emerging technology requirements for the DoD. Boeing views the FAB-T architecture as a solution that will address not only today's interoperability problems, but tomorrow's as well.

Other distinguishing features of the proposal include a layered, modular software-defined radio approach, and the collective knowledge, expertise and proven performance that the Boeing team brings to the FAB-T design and program execution.

Boeing has assembled a best-of-industry team, comprised of the nation's leading satellite systems, communications terminals and high performance data link providers, to execute the terms of the contract for the first increment. Principal members include Harris Corporation's Government Communications Systems division of Melbourne, Fla.; L-3 Communications' Communications Systems West division of Salt Lake City, Utah; TRW, Inc.'s Command, Control and Intelligence Division of Fairfax, Va. and ViaSat, Inc.'s Communications Systems Group of Carlsbad, Calif.

As prime contractor and lead system integrator, Boeing will be responsible for the systems engineering and integration, system and terminal architecture, software development, test and evaluation, integrated logistics support and communications engineering, with key support provided by Boeing Satellite Systems in El Segundo, Calif. Harris will be responsible for the integration of terminal and antenna hardware; L-3 Communications will be responsible for the development of the modem processor; TRW will be responsible for Advanced Extremely High Frequency waveform management; and ViaSat will be responsible for the communications security module hardware and information security.

FAB-T program activity will be carried out in multiple phases. The first increment, managed by the MILSATCOM Terminals Office at ESC, will include the integration of terminals onboard airborne platforms, as well as in various ground-based command posts. Future increments will encompass up to 41 additional airborne platforms with participation from all the armed services.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems, or IDS, is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a \$23 billion business. It provides systems solutions to its global military, government and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in launch services.

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