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The Boeing International Space Station team began work Oct. 1 on a contract that consolidates previous NASA payload integration contracts.

NASA awarded Boeing [NYSE: BA] the noncompetitive International Space Station Payload Integration Contract (IPIC) in September. It is a three-year contract worth about \$200 million. NASA Systems, a Houston-based business unit of Boeing Integrated Defense Systems, holds the contract designed to cut costs and reduce payload processing time by optimizing payload engineering and operations and streamlining the team structure. Of the three previous contracts, Boeing held two and United Space Alliance held one.

About 400 people in Houston and Huntsville, Ala., will work on the contract. Boeing's partners and subcontractors include Teledyne Brown Engineering, United Space Alliance, and several small and minority-owned businesses.

"With the consolidation into IPIC, the Boeing team will further develop the payload processing tasks required by our customer," said Rick Golden, Boeing IPIC program manager. "Our focus will be to provide better value and service to the NASA customer, improve the interfaces with the payload developers and owners, and enhance science and technology research efforts aboard the International Space Station."

Payload processing is the technique of preparing items such as spacecraft, scientific experiments, supplies and equipment for space flight. Specific tasks for IPIC include integrating science and technology research experiment racks, providing engineering analysis, developing payload-related software, and providing operations support to payloads once on orbit. Many of the items built for the International Space Station are unique and require special handling and processes.

The IPIC team works with Boeing specialists at Kennedy Space Center, Fla., who physically prepare the payloads for space flight as part of the Checkout, Assembly and Payload Processing Services contract awarded to Boeing in August. In addition, Boeing will work with NASA to ensure payloads meet the customers' technical, safety and operational requirements.

Boeing is NASA's prime contractor for the International Space Station and responsible for designing, constructing and integrating the components. The company, through its NASA Systems division, also supports the space agency in operating the ISS. Additionally, the NASA Systems division is a major subcontractor to United Space Alliance for space shuttle engineering support. Boeing also plays a key role in developing the future of human space flight to include designing new spacecraft and propulsion systems.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems 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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For further information:

Glen Golightly

714-372-4742

robert.g.golightly@boeing.com

Ann Beach

(562) 797-4222

ann.m.beach@boeing.com
