Switchboard In The Sky

The Tracking and Data Relay Satellite-J (TDRS-J) is scheduled for launch on Dec. 4. It is the third of three Boeing 601 satellites built by Boeing Satellite Systems of El Segundo, Calif., for NASA Goddard Space Flight Center of Greenbelt, Md. These satellites relay large volumes of voice, video and scientific user satellite data from manned missions or orbiting scientific spacecraft back to ground control centers. The three newest TDRS satellites add Ka-band capability, which more than doubles the available bandwidth and allows transmissions at data rates up to 500 Mbps higher than those offered by legacy TDRS satellites.

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