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TDRS-J, the third Boeing-built replenishment spacecraft for NASA's Tracking and Data Relay Satellite fleet, was successfully launched tonight from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla.

Boeing Satellite Systems, a unit of The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA], built the modified Boeing 601 satellite for NASA Goddard Space Flight Center of Greenbelt, Md. The launch took place at 9:42 p.m. EST (6:42 p.m. PST; 2:42 a.m. Dec. 5 GMT). The spacecraft's first signals were acquired 59 minutes later by NASA's Deep Space Network ground station in Canberra, Australia, confirming that its systems are operating normally.

"The TDRS spacecraft are the lifeline of mankind in space, and TDRS-J will add significant new capability to the TDRS fleet," said Randy Brinkley, president of Boeing Satellite Systems, the El Segundo, Calif.-based satellite-manufacturing arm of Boeing Integrated Defense Systems. "Along with TDRS-H and TDRS-I, this new spacecraft will help maintain and expand the specialized space communications capabilities of the TDRS constellation, which has served numerous national and international missions since 1983."

The TDRS fleet is unique in its ability to follow the motion of fast moving satellites, providing nearly continuous communication with controllers and researchers on Earth. In addition to the space shuttle, other NASA programs that use the TDRS fleet include the Hubble Space Telescope, the Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission, Landsat, the Earth Observing System, Expendable Launch Vehicle tracking, and the International Space Station.

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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