Boeing Rocketdyne to Provide Crew Escape Propulsion System

The Rocketdyne Propulsion & Power unit of The Boeing Company [NYSE:BA] has been selected to provide the liquid propulsion system for Lockheed Martin's Pad Abort Demonstration (PAD) for NASA's Orbital Space Plane program.

Boeing Rocketdyne's 200,000-pound-thrust propulsion system will be used to launch the PAD vehicle and demonstrate key escape and recovery systems applicable to future manned Orbital Space Plane (OSP) needs. NASA recently awarded Lockheed Martin a contract of up to $53 million, including options, for the work as part of the space agency's OSP project that is part of the Space Launch Initiative Cycle 2 TA-10 program.

"Safety is the number one priority for NASA's new OSP that will be initially launched from an expendable launch vehicle," said Terry Lorier, Boeing Rocketdyne's Crew Escape and Survivability Propulsion (CESP) program manager. "Building a crew escape capability into the planned OSP architecture greatly increases the safety of the crew in emergencies."

A liquid propulsion system offers flexibility in economically accomplishing Lockheed Martin's planned test program of up to seven launches. It could ultimately offer a significant weight savings to an integrated propulsion system that incorporates the CESP, Orbital Maneuvering System, and Reaction Control System by using common propellants for all needs.

Rocketdyne plans initial hot-fire testing of the developmental thrust chamber at NASA's Stennis Space Center in the fall of 2003, acceptance testing of the PAD engines at Stennis in early 2004, and testing of the integrated propulsion module beginning in late 2004 at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

Boeing is helping NASA develop the OSP as a reliable and economical way to transfer crew and cargo to the International Space Station and possibly serve as a rescue vehicle. Current plans call for the OSP to launch aboard an expendable launch vehicle, but it could also be launched aboard reusable vehicles under development.

A unit of the Launch & Satellite Systems business of Boeing Integrated Defense Systems, Rocketdyne Propulsion & Power is a global leader in the design, development and manufacture of rocket propulsion and space power systems. In addition to the Space Shuttle Main Engine, Boeing Rocketdyne provides propulsion systems for Delta and Atlas launch vehicles.

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For further information:
Dan Beck
(818) 586-4572
daniel.c.beck@boeing.com
Ann Beach
(562) 797-4222
ann.m.beach@boeing.com