Sea Launch Starts Countdown for August 7 Launch

The Sea Launch team has initiated the countdown at the equatorial launch site at L-72 hours. All systems are proceeding on schedule for the launch of the EchoStar IX/Telstar 13 communications satellite on Thursday, August 7, at 8:31 pm PDT (3:31:00 GMT).

The Odyssey Launch Platform and its sister ship, the Sea Launch Commander, arrived at the launch site at 154 degrees West Longitude on Sunday evening. The marine crew immediately began the process of ballasting the Launch Platform about 65 feet, to launch depth, in preparation for launch operations. The vessels are now stationed alongside each other and will be connected by a link bridge several times prior to the launch. On the day of launch, the ship will move uprange to a distance of three miles. All marine and launch personnel will be stationed on the ship throughout launch operations.

Sea Launch's three-stage Zenit-3SL rocket will loft the 4,737 kg (10,443 lb) EchoStar/Telstar 13 satellite to a high perigee geosynchronous transfer orbit. Following the successfully completed mission, the spacecraft will be located in geostationary orbit at 121 degrees West Longitude.

Built by Space Systems/Loral (SS/L) in Palo Alto, Calif., the satellite is based on SS/L's space-proven 1300 geostationary satellite platform. In a unique multi-band, satellite-sharing arrangement, EchoStar Communications Corporation will operate the Ku- and Ka-band payloads as EchoStar IX. Loral Skynet, a subsidiary of Loral Space & Communications, will own and operate the C-band payload as Telstar 13.

Sea Launch will provide a live satellite broadcast and simultaneous webcast of the EchoStar IX/Telstar 13 mission on August 7, beginning at 8:10pm PDT (3:10:00 GMT). The broadcast, featuring live video from the launch site as well as commentary and interviews, may be downlinked from the Sea Launch Broadcast Information Web site. Streaming video of the mission will be posted live at the Sea Launch webcast Web site.

Sea Launch Company, LLC, headquartered in Long Beach, Calif., is a world leader in providing heavy-lift commercial launch services. This multinational partnership offers the most direct and cost-effective route to geostationary orbit. With the advantage of a launch site on the Equator, the reliable Zenit-3SL rocket can lift a heavier spacecraft mass or provide longer life on orbit, offering best value plus schedule assurance. Sea Launch has a current backlog of 15 firm launch contracts. For additional information and images of this mission, please visit the Sea Launch website or call the Sea Launch Hot Line at 562.797.1000.

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