Sea Launch will Launch DIRECTV-7S for Arianespace

Sea Launch has signed an agreement with Arianespace to launch the DIRECTV-7S satellite in the First Quarter of 2004. Arianespace announced the assignment last week, through a cooperative arrangement with Boeing Launch Services under the launch service alliance. This will be Sea Launch's second mission for DIRECTV, having successfully completed its very first commercial mission in 1999 with the DIRECTV 1-R broadcast satellite.

"This agreement demonstrates confidence in the Sea Launch system by both our customers and alliance partners," said Jim Maser, president and general manager of Sea Launch. "It also demonstrates our ability to respond to customer needs for mission assurance."

DIRECTV-7S will operate from 119 degrees West Longitude but is also capable of operating from orbital 101 degrees West Longitude, the primary orbital slot for DIRECTV. It will provide direct-to-home (DTH) television customers in the United States with local channel service to additional markets and new services. Built by Space Systems/Loral (SS/L) in Palo Alto, Calif., this 5,550 kg-satellite will operate with 37 spot-beam transponders for regional broadcasting and seven super-high power beam transponders for national coverage from the 119 degrees West Longitude location.

The space-proven LS-1300 model spacecraft is one of several high capacity DTH broadcast satellites SS/L has built for DIRECTV, the leading U.S. digital television provider. The DIRECTV 7S satellite is a high priority launch for DIRECTV as the spot-beam spacecraft is slated to serve 60 local television markets across the United States.

The creation of the launch service alliance in July 2003, allowed Arianespace to negotiate a seamless transfer of the satellite to Sea Launch, and for DIRECTV to secure a guaranteed launch slot for this important mission. The alliance utilizes launch systems from three leading service providers -- Arianespace, Boeing Launch Services and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries -- to provide customers with on-time launches and total mission assurance.

Sea Launch Company, LLC, headquartered in Long Beach, Calif., and sold through (Boeing Launch Services), provides reliable, cost-effective, heavy lift launch services for commercial satellite customers. Sea Launch offers the optimal starting point for spacecraft heading to Geostationary Orbit. With the advantage of the world's only 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. For additional information, visit the Sea Launch website.

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