Sea Launch at Equator, Preparing for Telstar 18 Mission

The Sea Launch team will initiate a 72-hour countdown tonight in preparation for the launch of Loral's Telstar 18 communications satellite, scheduled for Monday, June 28, in a launch window that will open at 8:59pm PDT (3:59 GMT, June 29). All systems are proceeding on schedule.

The *Odyssey* Launch Platform and her sister ship, the *Sea Launch Commander*, arrived at the launch site at 154 degrees West Longitude last night. The marine crew began the process of ballasting the Launch Platform about 65 feet, to launch depth, in preparation for launch operations. The vessels will be stationed alongside each other throughout the weekend, frequently connected by a link bridge that enables foot traffic between them.

On the day of launch, the platform will be evacuated and all personnel will be stationed on the ship, positioned three miles uprange, throughout launch operations. Sea Launch's Zenit-3SL vehicle will lift the 4640 kg (10,229 lb) Telstar 18 spacecraft to a high perigee geosynchronous transfer orbit, on its way to a final orbital position at 138 degrees East Longitude.

Built by Space Systems/Loral and operated by Loral Skynet, both subsidiaries of Loral Space & Communications, the high-powered 1300-model spacecraft will carry 54 active transponders -- 16 Ku-band transponders and 38 C-band transponders -- that will cover the Asia/Pacific region with multiple services, including cable programming, direct-to-home broadcasting, Internet, VSAT and IP-based two-way services within Asia while providing an inter-connect to the United States.

Sea Launch will provide a live satellite broadcast of the Telstar 18 mission on June 28, beginning at 8:40pm PDT (3:40 GMT, June 29).

Sea Launch Company, LLC, headquartered in Long Beach, Calif., and marketed through Boeing Launch Services , is the world's most reliable commercial heavy-lift launch services provider. 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. For additional information and images of this mission, please visit the Sea Launch website.

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