Boeing "ACES" Army Award for Future Combat Systems Innovation

The United States Army today cited Boeing [NYSE:BA] and its partners for the "major, positive impact" the Advanced Collaborative Environment (ACE) has had on the Future Combat Systems (FCS) program that is the core of Army transformation efforts.

"The Advanced Collaborative Environment has already had a major impact on the lifecycle of the FCS weapon platforms and helped to reduce the FCS program timeline," said Brigadier General Charles Cartwright, FCS Program Manager. "The ACE program has proven its value not only for the Army, but for the entire Department of Defense."

As created by Boeing in support of the Future Combat Systems program, the Advanced Collaborative Environment:

- Enables the systems engineering, design, development, test, production and support of the integrated FCS systems-of-systems network and platforms
- Allows FCS engineers and program managers to conduct preliminary and critical design reviews in a secure medium from hundreds of sites across the country
- Is a primary medium for support of all of the FCS program decisions and milestone reviews

"This award is tremendously encouraging for the team that created and maintains ACE," said Rich Crispo, director of the Boeing ACE integrated product team. "Two years ago, we started with five people and a set of customer requirements and today we're 130-strong and growing. It's very gratifying to know the Army appreciates what we and our partners at Science Applications International Corp. and Parametric Technologies Corp. have accomplished."

Crispo also noted that the need for an innovative approach to information management has always been a major part of the Army's FCS requirements. "Of the original 35-page FCS request for proposals, eight pages focused exclusively on the need for a collaborative environment to link the customer and the hundreds of suppliers," he said.

"One of the things the Army likes most about ACE is that it seamlessly controls access to data and information at 16 different levels so people can see only what they need to see. That's very important to a program composed of the Army, Boeing, SAIC, 23 major companies, 94 additional suppliers and more than 8, 000 individual users," Crispo added.

FCS is a joint (across all the military services) networked "system of systems" -- one large system made up of 18 individual systems, plus the network, plus the soldier. It utilizes advanced communications and technologies to link soldiers with both manned and unmanned ground and air platforms and sensors. FCS is agile -- allowing forces to move quickly -- and versatile -- which allows troops to conduct a variety of missions.

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