Boeing Completes SBSS Pathfinder Preliminary Design Review

Boeing [NYSE: BA], in partnership with Northrop Grumman Mission Systems, has successfully completed the Preliminary Design Review (PDR) for the Space Based Space Surveillance (SBSS) Pathfinder system. This is another significant program milestone demonstrating the "best-of-industry" approach the Boeing team has developed to meet program requirements.

The PDR, which was held in Huntington Beach, Calif., and included over 100 participants from the government and its contractors, conducted a thorough review of the SBSS Pathfinder system architecture and design. The review was the culmination of a detailed Ground Segment Preliminary Design Audit (PDA) conducted by Boeing in early January, and a detailed Space Vehicle Preliminary Design Audit (PDA) conducted by Ball Aerospace, the spacecraft and payload provider, in late January. At the conclusion of the 4-day PDR event, the Air Force customer was very pleased with the level of the review.

Col James Haywood, the Space Superiority Material Wing Commander concluded with, "Superb job on a successful PDR, a mature design and well-integrated baseline."

Under a contract awarded in March 2004, the Boeing team is developing a spacecraft with a visible sensor and ground segment. The team is also responsible for mission planning, mission data processing, a 2008 launch, and an option to operate the system for up to one year prior to transitioning operations and maintenance to the Air Force customer.

"Our reliance on, and the potential vulnerability of our national space assets, underscores the importance of developing a robust space situational awareness capability," said John Fuller, vice president of Air Force Space Systems for Boeing. "As a horizontally integrated company, we are able to access the capabilities and talent across the Boeing enterprise and the rest of industry."

SBSS Pathfinder is a low-risk, executable, cost-effective addition to the space situational awareness architecture. Looking toward the future, the SBSS Objective System will consist of a constellation of satellites that will further increase capacity and timeliness of detecting and tracking orbiting space objects, including potential future threats to America 's space assets. The Department of Defense will utilize data generated by the system to support worldwide military operations.

The SBSS Pathfinder program is jointly managed by the U.S. Air Force's Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles Air Force Base, CA, Northrop Grumman Mission System, Redondo Beach, CA, and Boeing Air Force Systems, Long Beach, CA, a business unit of Boeing Integrated Defense Systems.

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