Boeing Dedicates Delta IV West Coast Launch Site

Boeing [NYSE: BA] marked the official opening of its new Space Launch Complex 6 (SLC-6) facility April 27 at a dedication ceremony held at Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB), Calif.

SLC-6 is the new West Coast launch site for the Boeing Delta IV family of launch vehicles supporting the U.S. Air Force Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) program. The site will provide the Air Force the strategic capability to launch national security satellites to polar, Sun-synchronous and high inclination orbits.

The completion of SLC-6 marks the final installment of Boeing's fulfillment of the EELV program's three requirements for assured access to space having developed an American main engine (RS-68), a heavy-lift vehicle (Delta IV Heavy), and East/West Coast launch sites (SLC-37 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., and SLC-6).

"The completion of SLC-6 is a great achievement by our company, our Delta team, and for our launch customers. SLC-6 provides our nation with increased launch capability from the West Coast, combined with our successful launch capability on the East Coast. I'm proud of our Delta team's accomplishment activating this new launch site, and we're looking forward to the first Delta IV launch from SLC-6 later this year," said Dan Collins, vice president, Boeing Expendable Launch Systems.

On hand for the dedication was George Muellner, vice president and general manager, Boeing Air Force Systems; Lt. Gen. Brian Arnold, Commander of the Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center; Col. Frank Gallegos, Commander of the Air Force 30th Space Wing; and Lt. Col. Walt Lauderdale, commander of the National Reconnaissance Office at Vandenberg.

The 132-acre complex features structures similar to Boeing's Delta IV launch site in Florida, SLC-37, with a Fixed Umbilical Tower (FUT), Mobile Service Tower (MST), Fixed Pad Erector, Launch Control Center/Operations Building and a Horizontal Integration Facility (HIF). SLC-6 also features a Mobile Assembly Shelter (MAS) that protects the rocket from weather conditions at the pad.

The SLC-6 development project included the placement of a 650-ton concrete launch table where the rocket stands. Renovation and modifications were made to the pad's MST, MAS and FUT. The FUT features a 180-foot tall lightening tower on top of the structure and will use three swing arms that attach to the launch vehicle. The MST, which rolls up to the vehicle and encloses it during preparation, features multi-level moveable platforms allowing technicians 360-degree access to the rocket.

SLC-6 can support all five configurations of the Delta IV rocket family including the Delta IV Heavy.

The first launch from SLC-6 is planned for this summer. A Delta IV Medium+ vehicle will fly a National Reconnaissance Office mission, NROL-22.

The Boeing Delta IV is produced at the Boeing Delta factory in Decatur, Ala. The RS-68 is produced at Rocketdyne in Canoga Park, Calif. Delta vehicle processing and launch operations are located in Florida and California. The Boeing Delta program is headquartered in Huntington Beach, Calif.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $30.5 billion business. It provides network-centric system solutions to its global military, government, and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in sustainment solutions and launch services.

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