Boeing Successfully Completes Additional Milestones on GPS IIF Program

Boeing [NYSE: BA] announced the successful completion of several major milestones on the Global Positioning System (GPS) IIF program.

The first GPS IIF satellite (SV-1) has successfully completed initial electromagnetic compatibility and interference testing using flight-like placeholder units. This critical test, conducted at the company's Satellite Development Center in El Segundo, Calif., verified that the GPS IIF SV-1 radiated emissions and RF compatibility design complies with system specifications and variants of the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle. An additional regression test will be completed prior to SV-1 delivery using actual flight hardware.

"It is unique in the space industry to be working on a new improved generation of GPS satellites, and at the same time see our earlier satellites perform so well," said John Fuller, vice president of Boeing Air Force Space Systems. "This recent series of significant performance accomplishments verifies significant system assembly and testing procedures of the Block IIF satellite, as we continue raising the bar on mission capability."

Just prior to the electromagnetic testing, the GPS IIF Team also finished the first pass through GPS Launch Anomaly and Disposal Operations (LADO) Release 1 Element Qualification Test (EQT) testing with a 97 percent pass rate, and completed Release 2 computer software configuration item (CSCI) qualification testing with a 100 percent pass rate.

LADO, when fielded, will provide the capability of controlling GPS satellites during launch and disposal phases, as well as performing anomaly detection and resolution while on orbit. This capability is extremely important with vital national space assets like the GPS constellation. The next phase of final system testing will involve practice "shadow operations" during future launches. The system is scheduled for its initial operational capability in late 2006.

Boeing is currently working under $1.3 billion-contract to build nine Block IIF satellites, with a potential of up to 12. In addition, the current contract value to support the GPS ground segment is approximately $800 million. Boeing plans to make the first Block IIF available for launch in 2008.

During October 2005, a Boeing-built GPS Block II satellite SVN-15 (nick named Firebird) reached 15 years of service on orbit, surpassing twice its design life. SVN-15 was launched on Oct. 1, 1990, and becomes the second Block II vehicle to achieve twice its design life.

"Our overall momentum is increasing as we complete these milestones and continue final assembly of SV-1 and the other Block IIF satellites on the line," said Mike Rizzo, director of navigation systems for Boeing Air Force Space Systems. "We are extremely proud of our heritage of excellent workmanship, as indicated by the Block II satellites exceeding twice their design life."

For over three decades Boeing has played a key role in designing, building and operating GPS satellites. Under Air Force contract Boeing has produced 40 GPS Block I, II and IIA satellites. The Space and Missile Systems Center manages the GPS program through a joint program office at Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif. Today, the GPS constellation is an invaluable national asset for both military and civilian users.

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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For further information:
Erik Simonsen
Boeing Air Force Space Systems
office: (714) 372-2808
erik.simonsen@boeing.com
Robert Villanueva
Boeing Air Force Systems
office: (714) 372-2089
robert.s.villanueva@boeing.com