Sea Launch Initiates Countdown for EchoStar X Launch

The Sea Launch team has initiated a 72-hour countdown in preparation for the launch of the EchoStar X broadcast satellite on Wednesday, February 8, at the opening of a 49-minute launch window, at 3:35 pm Pacific Time (23:35 GMT).

With launch site operations now underway at 154 degrees West Longitude on the Equator, the *Odyssey* Launch Platform is ballasted to its launch depth and stationed alongside the *Sea Launch Commander* (Assembly and Command Ship), periodically connected by a link-bridge that enables foot traffic between the two vessels.

A Zenit-3SL rocket will be rolled out of its environmentally protected hangar and automatically erected on the launch pad a day before the launch. The platform will be evacuated, with all personnel safely stationed on the ship, three miles uprange from the platform, for the remainder of launch operations. On launch day, the rocket will lift the 4,333 kg (9,532 lb.) EchoStar X satellite to geosynchronous transfer orbit (GTO), on the way to its final orbital position of 110 degrees West Longitude.

This is Sea Launch's second mission for EchoStar and its first mission with a Lockheed Martin spacecraft. Built by Lockheed Martin Commercial Space Systems, the high-power Ku Band A2100-AX spacecraft is designed with a minimum service life of 15 years on orbit. Optimized with additional bandwidth for direct broadcast applications, EchoStar X is a new-generation satellite that will enable DISH Network to deliver expanded television services and channel offerings to its customers throughout the United States.

Sea Launch will carry a live satellite feed and streaming video of the entire mission, beginning at 3:15 pm PT (23:15 GMT). Transponder coordinates for downlinking this feed will be posted at: www.boeing.com/nosearch/sealaunch/broadcast.html. A simultaneous webcast may be accessed at: www.sea-launch.com/current_index_webcast.html

Sea Launch Company, LLC, headquartered in Long Beach, Calif., is the world's most reliable commercial launch services provider. With the advantage of a launch site on the Equator, the robust Zenit-3SL rocket can lift a heavier spacecraft mass or provide longer life on orbit, yielding best value plus schedule assurance. Sea Launch offers the most direct and cost-effective route to geostationary orbit. For additional information, please visit the Sea Launch website at: www.sea-launch.com
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