Boeing to Begin Work on Fourth Wideband Gapfiller Satellite

Boeing [NYSE:BA] has received a $148 million contract from the U.S. Air Force to begin work on the fourth satellite in the Wideband Gapfiller Satellite (WGS) system, a 13-kilowatt spacecraft based upon Boeing's 702 satellite model.

The Air Force has authorized Boeing to begin non-recurring engineering and advanced procurement of parts for the fourth satellite known as WGS F4. Boeing is already under contract to build the first three satellites for the WGS system, a multi-spacecraft constellation designed to provide improved communications support for America's war fighters. Boeing is working to have the first WGS satellite ready for launch in June 2007.

"The Wideband Gapfiller Satellite constellation will be a key element of a high-capacity SATCOM system, and provide a quantum leap in the communications capabilities for the war fighter. Authorization to begin developing the fourth satellite in the Wideband Gapfiller Satellite system will allow for improved effectiveness of our deployed forces and ultimately save lives," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Steve Hargis, the WGS program manager.

"Boeing has leveraged a wealth of experience and capability for WGS, including extensive investments in the digital signal processors, phased array antennas and the 702 satellite bus," said Michael Gianelli, vice president of Navigation and Communications Systems for Boeing Space & Intelligence Systems. "Together, these capabilities enable the tremendous capacity and operational flexibility our nation requires. We are very pleased to be in a position to provide additional WGS capabilities to meet the government's growing needs for additional bandwidth."

A single WGS satellite provides a huge leap in capability over the current Defense Satellite Communications System satellites, with more communications capacity than the entire constellation currently on station. The WGS satellites address a critical bandwidth shortfall. The satellites provide two-way, point-to-point, multicast and broadcast communications that may potentially support what is known as "communications-on-the-move" for troops in the field.

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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