Boeing Parts Marking Technology Now Available in Licensing Agreement with St. Louis Woman-Owned Business

A licensing agreement between The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] and FutureWorks Group of St. Louis will make a Boeing-patented system used to track more than 7,000 parts on the CH-47 Chinook helicopter available for use by other businesses and the U.S. government. Under the 15-year agreement, FutureWorks Group, a woman-owned firm, will market services based on Boeing's Opportunistic Parts Marking technology.

The Item Identity Management, or I^2M, service suite is designed to meet federal regulations requiring that all U.S. Department of Defense parts worth more than $5,000 or meeting other criteria must be individually marked and tracked by the government by the end of 2010. The parts marking and tracking technology also has international applications, as foreign military services and other commercial businesses could benefit from marking and tracking items throughout their lifecycle.

"The parts marking service has proven ideal for fast, cost effective item marking and data management within Boeing Integrated Defense Systems (IDS)," said Jeff Geear, manager of the Boeing IDS Automatic Identification Technology team. "The system includes software to create parts marking instructions; databases for creating unique identification numbers, storing information about marked parts and registering the information with the government; and software to control remote parts marking tools and verification equipment. Based on its success, our team is promoting the use of the system throughout Boeing as a best practice for marking legacy parts."

Parts are directly marked using non-intrusive labels, dot peen, ink-jet, chemical etch, active memory devices and other methods. The kind of mark is determined by the size and use of the part. When the mark on a part is read, the database retrieves all the stored information for the part. The database provides total visibility of parts in an inventory and maximizes the capability of support logistics. Maintainers know how long parts have been in place and can pinpoint when systems are working as expected or failing more often. It allows for better planned maintenance, reliability studies and analysis and information vital to designing future systems.

It is estimated that tens of millions of unique identifications will be needed by 2010 to meet the Department of Defense requirement.

"We are committed to helping our customers achieve unique identification policy compliance in the most expedient and cost effective manner possible," said Lissa Hollenbeck, vice president, Boeing Product Support and Services. "The ability to apply unique identification marks on legacy fleet assets is a key enabler for effective performance based logistics."

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 $30.8 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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