Boeing Completes Critical Wideband Gapfiller Satellite Ground Compatibility Tests

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] today announced its Wideband Gapfiller Satellite (WGS) program has successfully completed two more key space-to-ground compatibility tests with partners Universal Space Network (USN) and ITT Industries. The joint tests, conducted at the Boeing Satellite Development Center in El Segundo, Calif., proved the interoperability between the satellite and two key ground control systems used during orbital operations.

Boeing and USN demonstrated the compatibility between the satellite's telemetry, command and ranging systems and USN's ground network. Testers controlled a WGS satellite via USN's ground network simulator at Boeing's mission control center in El Segundo. USN's network of ground stations in Hawaii, Alaska and a collaborative station in Italy will play crucial roles during WGS transfer orbit operations and initial on-orbit testing.

"The successful completion of these two tests retires a significant amount of risk for the WGS program and further validates the compatibility of its satellite and ground equipment," said Claire Leon, Boeing WGS program director. "This keeps the WGS launch on track for 2007."

Boeing also verified telemetry and command interface compatibility between the satellite and the Gapfiller Satellite Configuration and Control Element (GSCCE). The GSCCE payload control system, designed by Boeing and ITT Industries, will be fielded at Wideband Satellite Communications Operations Centers around the world. The tests confirmed the system's ability to properly configure the digital channelizer and the X-band phased array antennas, which are key elements of the WGS communications payload.

WGS is the key element of a high-capacity satellite communications system, designed to quickly disseminate large amounts of data to the warfighter. With a growing need for bandwidth, including two-way, point-to-point, multicast and broadcast communications, the WGS satellites will provide additional network-centric communications capabilities for troops in the field.

Boeing is under contract to build three satellites for the WGS program. The U.S. Air Force also has authorized Boeing to begin non-recurring engineering and advanced procurement of parts for a fourth WGS satellite. The WGS system is a multi-spacecraft constellation designed to provide improved communications support for America's warfighters.

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; a foremost developer of advanced concepts and technologies; 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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