Boeing to Build More Wideband Gapfiller Satellites

Boeing [NYSE:BA] and the U.S. Air Force MILSATCOM Systems Wing have signed a $1.067 billion contract for up to three more Wideband Gapfiller Satellites (WGS), if all options are exercised.

The Block II satellites will be similar to the three Block I satellites already in production. Under Block II, Boeing will add a radio frequency bypass capability designed to support airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms requiring ultra-high bandwidth and data rates demanded by unmanned aerial vehicles.

"This new Block II contract gives the Air Force the flexibility to independently exercise options for long-lead material, production and launch services for WGS F4 through F6," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Adam Mortenson, WGS Block II program manager. "One WGS satellite will provide more throughput than the entire Defense Service Communications Satellite (DSCS) constellation currently on station, which translates into improved effectiveness of our worldwide forces, and ultimately, into lives saved."

In February, the Air Force authorized Boeing to begin non-recurring engineering and advanced procurement of parts for the fourth WGS satellite. Boeing anticipates Air Force authorization to proceed with full production of WGS F4 and to begin long-lead work for F5 by the end of 2006. These revolutionary, 13-kilowatt WGS satellites are based on Boeing's 702 models and are designed to provide improved communications support for America's warfighters.

"We have designed an incredibly capable satellite system with tremendous operational flexibility, which will become even more apparent when the first vehicle is launched next year," said Charles Toups, vice president of Navigation and Communications Systems for Boeing Space & Intelligence Systems. "We are very pleased the Air Force has chosen Boeing to fulfill this critical communications need."

Boeing is preparing the first WGS satellite for launch in 2007. The Block II contract calls for the launch of F4 by the first quarter of 2011 and subsequent launches every year thereafter. WGS will augment and eventually replace the DSCS currently on station. Boeing has leveraged a wealth of experience and capability for WGS, including extensive investments in the 702 satellite bus, digital signal processors and phased array antennas. These capabilities enable the tremendous capacity and operational flexibility the U.S. military requires.

The results contained in this submission were generated in whole, or in part, through work supporting the MILSATCOM Systems Wing.

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