Boeing Completes Critical Wideband Global SATCOM Satellite Tests

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] has successfully completed end-to-end testing of the Wideband Global SATCOM (WGS) payload command and control system, paving the way for the launch of the first WGS satellite this summer.

During the tests, the newly-installed WGS ground station equipment at the Camp Roberts Wideband Satellite Communications Operations Center in Paso Robles, Calif., communicated with a WGS satellite located at Boeing's El Segundo, Calif., satellite factory, successfully routing operational commands through the Satellite Operations Center at Schriever Air Force Base, Colo., and a U.S. Air Force satellite control network connection at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M.

The tests supported a significant risk reduction activity to ensure the system, designed by Boeing and ITT Corporation, can communicate with an actual WGS satellite.

"The WGS team closely simulated how WGS will operate on orbit, and both the ground equipment and the satellite performed flawlessly," said Howard Chambers, vice president and general manager, Boeing Space and Intelligence Systems. "The tests retired a significant amount of risk for our customer."

The tests also demonstrated a unique design feature of the WGS system, allowing both U.S. Air Force and Army operators to control the payload via separate S-band and in-band (X or Ka-band) radio frequency links for greater operational flexibility and redundancy.

Boeing is under U.S. Air Force contract to build three WGS Block I and two WGS Block II satellites -- all key elements of a high-capacity satellite communications system. WGS is designed to quickly disseminate large amounts of data to satisfy the warfighter's growing need for increased bandwidth.

In addition to the Block I features, the two WGS Block II satellites will include a radio frequency bypass capability designed to support airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms with data rates of up to 311 megabits per second. The WGS satellites are all Boeing 702 models with13-kilowatts of power. The first Block II satellite is expected to launch in early 2011.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $32.4 billion business with 72,000 employees worldwide.
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