Boeing to Bid for Ares I Instrument Unit Avionics Contract

Decades of successful spaceflight and aircraft avionics integration and a highly experienced network of suppliers are the key to the Boeing [NYSE: BA] bid to provide a low-risk approach to producing Instrument Unit Avionics (IUA) for the next-generation Ares I crew launch vehicle.

Boeing will submit its final IUA proposal July 30 -- just eight weeks after NASA issued its initial request. NASA plans to select an IUA contractor in November.

"It's important that NASA and its future space explorers can depend on an avionics system built on proven experience that is safe and reliable," says former NASA astronaut and Boeing vice president and general manager Brewster Shaw. "Boeing has unique capabilities to produce the critical avionics and software needed, drawing on more than 45 years of human space flight and commercial airplane experience. We are confident that Boeing can produce and integrate the best avionics system for NASA's next generation system."

If selected, Boeing will work closely with NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., to support avionics design requirements and functional integration as well as IUA procurement and production. Boeing has a large, highly experienced workforce in Huntsville that provides systems integration for missile defense systems, the International Space Station and other projects. This experience base is significant in that the IUA contractor also will provide avionics components for other Ares I segments, engineering and test support, training and sustaining engineering. NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center will be responsible for the overall IUA design and certification.

"Boeing's vast experience in manufacturing and integrating avionics systems into military, space and commercial products will significantly lower customer risks," said Dwight Potter, Boeing's Ares I IUA program manager. "We'll continue to rely on our experienced, industry-rated workforce in Huntsville as well as a network of local and national suppliers to execute a producible, high quality and affordable system. These long-term relationships are critical to providing NASA a tailored, innovative solution."

Boeing also will leverage its unrivaled safety and mission assurance record in its Ares I IUA offering, highlighting the countless airline passengers, space travelers and warfighters who rely on its avionics systems every day.

"Our day-to-day business focuses on transporting people and products safely and putting in place the procedures needed to ensure mission success," said Potter. "Our continued work in human space flight avionics on the International Space Station and space shuttle programs illustrates our reliability and performance as reflected in our consistently high NASA award fees."

The IUA, which guides the rocket into orbit, consists of onboard computers, flight controls, communications equipment, gyroscopes and other instruments and their associated software for monitoring the rocket's speed and position while supporting safe assembly, check-out and flight operation.

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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