

Boeing and Airborne Laser Teammates Celebrate 2007 Program Achievements During California Ceremony

The Boeing Company [NYSE:BA], industry teammates and the U.S. Missile Defense Agency today celebrated the Airborne Laser (ABL) program's 2007 major accomplishments and highlighted California's contributions to ABL's revolutionary missile defense capabilities during a ceremony at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif.

Missile Defense Agency and Department of Defense representatives, Air Force guests and elected officials stood alongside hundreds of California workers and members of the Air Force's 417th Flight Test Squadron at Hangar 151, which houses the ABL aircraft, as officials from the Missile Defense Agency and the industry team hailed progress toward giving the United States a first-ever speed-of-light defense against hostile ballistic missiles. The Airborne Laser recently completed a series of flight tests at Edwards in which ABL tracked an airborne target, measured and compensated for atmospheric turbulence and fired a surrogate high energy laser at the target.

The Airborne Laser consists of a modified Boeing 747-400F whose back half will hold the high energy laser -- the world's largest and most powerful mobile laser. Northrop Grumman Space Technology in Redondo Beach, Calif., designed and built the megawatt-class laser. The aircraft's front half contains the beam control/fire control system, provided by Lockheed Martin Space Systems in Sunnyvale, Calif., and the battle management system, provided by Boeing in Seattle, Wash. Altogether, the program accounts for about 800 jobs in California.

"This ceremony symbolizes many significant accomplishments," said Scott Fancher, vice president and general manager of Boeing Missile Defense Systems. "The collective team has done a phenomenal job completing system flight tests with the surrogate high energy laser and preparing the aircraft for installation of the actual high energy laser. Once again, we made and demonstrated enormous progress toward ushering in a new age of directed energy weapons."

The ceremony highlighted the Airborne Laser team's success in achieving a series of significant performance objectives in flight for the first time:

- March 16: Fired ABL's track illuminator laser (TILL) to track an airborne target
- May 1: Used ABL's infrared sensors to locate, acquire and track an F-16 fighter jet moving vertically at a rapid rate of ascent
- June 29: Fired ABL's surrogate high energy laser (SHEL) through the aircraft's nose-mounted turret
- July 13: Fired both the TILL and the SHEL at an airborne target
- July 24: Fired ABL's beacon illuminator laser (BILL) at an airborne target and used the reflection to determine compensation for atmospheric disturbances
- Aug. 23: Completed numerous flight tests in which ABL fired all three lasers -- the TILL, the BILL and the SHEL -- at an airborne target, demonstrating the ability to track the target, measure and compensate for atmospheric turbulence and deliver the SHEL's simulated lethal beam on the target

The team began installing the actual high energy laser in the aircraft on Sept. 4 at Edwards. When integration is completed, the program will conduct an extensive series of system-level ground and flight tests, leading to an intercept test against an in-flight ballistic missile in 2009.

Boeing is the prime contractor for ABL, which will provide speed-of-light capability to destroy all classes of ballistic missiles in their boost phase of flight. ABL's speed, precision and lethality also have potential for other missions, including destroying air-to-air, cruise and surface-to-air missiles. Boeing provides the modified aircraft and the battle management system and is the overall systems integrator. ABL partners are Northrop Grumman [NYSE: NOC], which supplies the high energy laser and the beacon illuminator laser, and Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT], which provides the nose-mounted turret and the beam control/fire control system.

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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