Boeing to Build a Sixth Wideband Global SATCOM Satellite

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] today announced that the U.S. Air Force has exercised an option for a sixth Wideband Global SATCOM (WGS) satellite and has authorized Boeing to begin construction. The Commonwealth of Australia is funding the procurement as part of a cooperative agreement between the U.S. and Australian governments. The satellite is expected to launch in the fourth quarter of 2012.

"This is a unique, win-win arrangement between the Australian and U.S. governments, and Boeing is honored to support it," said Howard Chambers, vice president and general manager of Boeing Space and Intelligence Systems. "A sixth WGS satellite adds to the system's overall capacity and flexibility and will benefit both U.S. armed forces and our allies."

A memorandum of understanding signed by both governments on Nov. 14 adds Australian Defence Force access to WGS services worldwide in exchange for funding the constellation's sixth satellite. The advance procurement contract enables Boeing to obtain long-lead materials for the satellite. The six WGS satellites are valued at US$1.8 billion, which includes associated ground-based payload command and control systems, mission unique software and databases, satellite simulators, logistics support and operator training. Boeing also performs final satellite processing and preparations for launch, as well as initial orbital operations and on-orbit testing.

"The WGS program office is very excited about this new partnership," said Col. Donald W. Robbins, U.S. Air Force commander, Wideband SATCOM Group. "We look forward to fielding the sixth WGS satellite."

The sixth WGS satellite, a Block II version, will carry the radio frequency (RF) bypass capability designed to support airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms requiring additional bandwidth. The RF bypass supports data rates of up to 311 Megabits per second, more than 200 times faster than most cable or DSL connections. Boeing will design and manufacture the 702 model spacecraft at its satellite factory in El Segundo, Calif.

A United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket successfully launched the first WGS satellite Oct. 10 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Base, Fla. It is now in geosynchronous orbit undergoing rigorous testing and is expected to begin service in the first quarter of 2008.

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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For further information:
Dave Garlick
Space & Intelligence Systems
The Boeing Company
office: (310) 364-8286
dave.garlick@boeing.com
Lewis Brinson
Space & Intelligence Systems
The Boeing Company
office: (310) 364-6125
lewis.b.brinson@boeing.com