Boeing and Ball Aerospace Achieve New Milestone for SBSS Program

Boeing / Ball Aerospace & Technologies logo

ST. LOUIS, April 21, 2008 -- The Space Based Space Surveillance (SBSS) System Block 10 team, led by Boeing [NYSE: BA] with Ball Aerospace and Technologies Corp. [NYSE: BLL] providing the space vehicle, today announced completion of the payload electronics, high-speed gimbal and testing of the space vehicle's visible sensor, enabling the start of payload integration and test.

The SBSS gimbal and visible sensor enable responsive tasking as events in space warrant. The Boeing-provided onboard payload computer performs immediate detection of space objects and provides future capability for improved Block 10 performance. Boeing's architectural analysis shows this combination of capabilities significantly improves space situational awareness.

"With the completion of the visible sensor, gimbal and payload electronics, 85 percent of the SBSS flight hardware is complete," said Jeff Osterkamp, Ball Aerospace vice president for National Defense Solutions and Program Management. "The integration of the milestones demonstrates the team's ability to develop state-of-the-art systems."

Prior to integration, the successful gimbal function test verified maximum slew rate, acceleration and range-of-motion capabilities for the gimbal, a two-axis system that rotates and points the 500-pound payload. The Ball Aerospace beryllium yoke design enables the gimbal's agility and maneuverability. In recent months, Ball also successfully completed assembly and acceptance testing of the platform's propulsion subsystem.

"This is a big milestone for the SBSS program and a leap in technology improvements in support of space situational awareness," said Craig Cooning, vice president and general manager for Boeing Space & Intelligence Systems. "The completion of this hardware and associated software brings us closer to launch readiness."

The SBSS program consists of a constellation of satellites that will further increase capacity and timeliness of detecting and tracking orbiting space objects, including potential future threats to the United States' space assets. The U.S. Department of Defense will use data generated by the system to support worldwide military operations.

Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. supports critical missions for the Department of Defense, NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other U.S. government and commercial entities. The company develops and manufactures spacecraft, advanced instruments and sensors, components, data exploitation systems and radio frequency solutions for strategic, tactical and scientific applications. Ball Corp. [NYSE: BLL] is a supplier of high-quality metal and plastic packaging products for beverage, food and household products customers, and of aerospace and other technologies and services, primarily for the U.S. government. Ball Corp. and its subsidiaries employ more than 15,500 people worldwide and reported 2007 sales of $7.4 billion.
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 $32.1 billion business with 71,000 employees worldwide.
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Contact Info:
Lewis Brinson
Space & Intelligence Systems
The Boeing Company
(310) 364-6125
lewis.b.brinson@boeing.com
Roz Brown
Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp.
(303)-533-6059
rbrown@ball.com