Boeing Increases Capability of On-Orbit US Navy Satellite

EL SEGUNDO, Calif., Jan. 07, 2009 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] has successfully reconfigured an on-orbit U.S. Navy satellite, adding 30 percent more communications capability. The satellite, the 11th in the Ultra-High Frequency Follow-On (UFO) series built by Boeing, was launched in 2003 and supports the Navy's global communications network, serving ships at sea and a variety of other U.S. military fixed and mobile terminals.

UFO 11 has the most sophisticated digital signal processor in the constellation. Its ability to reprogram existing user channels allowed Boeing to exploit small, unused portions of the allocated radio frequency spectrum to add 10 channels, for a total of 54.

"Given the extremely high demand for tactical communications in Southwest Asia, our Navy customer asked us to investigate ways to maximize the current capabilities of the UFO 11 spacecraft," said Craig Cooning, vice president and general manager of Boeing Space and Intelligence Systems. "After a series of careful analyses and rigorous testing, we found a way to achieve this goal at no additional cost to the customer.

"The military's need for communications bandwidth continues to rise," Cooning added. "Our unique combination of highly capable satellite hardware and experienced, highly skilled engineers allowed us to provide additional bandwidth that will directly support our men and women in uniform."

The satellite reconfiguration was accomplished in conjunction with U.S. Strategic Command, the Navy's Program Executive Office -- Space Systems, and the Naval Satellite Operations Command.

Boeing received the UFO contract in July 1988. By November 1999, all options had been exercised and the company began production of UFO 11. The spacecraft features both ultra high-frequency and extremely high-frequency payloads, which provide protected communications. Boeing UFO satellites have provided the Navy with a total of more than 100 years of service to date.

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