Boeing Completes Major Design Milestone for SkyHook Heavy Lift Vehicle

ST. LOUIS, July 28, 2009 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] and SkyHook International Inc. today announced that the design of the SkyHook Heavy Lift Vehicle (HLV) has reached the configuration freeze milestone, meaning the aircraft's overall performance and layout have been established.

Boeing and SkyHook have worked on the SkyHook HLV's structural and systems design and its concept of operations since July 2008, resulting in the following improvements:

- the addition of a three-piece tail for enhanced maneuverability
- integration of lifting and thrusting propulsion systems
- improved aerodynamics for increased payload capacity and range.

"Boeing's Advanced Rotorcraft Systems team and our industry partner, SkyHook International Inc., are extremely pleased with the progress on the engineering of the aircraft," said Kenneth Laubsch, SkyHook program manager for Boeing. "We all sense that we are part of something revolutionary in the advancement of this extraordinary technology, and the aerospace industry in general."

The next major program milestone will be Detailed Design in 2011, which centers on the design, analysis and specification of all hardware, software and related aircraft and ground support systems interfaces.

"The SkyHook HLV technology is like nothing that has ever existed. We anticipate that the operational capability of this aircraft will allow SkyHook's customers to radically change the way they resupply and operate in remote regions, especially the north," said Rob Mayfield, director of SkyHook. "In the oil and gas industry, there are significant pressures on cost, speed, safety, and environmental impact, and the SkyHook HLV represents solutions to each of these challenges in various applications."

SkyHook is designed to carry 80,000-pound (40-ton) sling loads up to 200 nautical miles without refueling -- a capability that is not currently available, but is desired by several industries, including oil exploration and mining operations in the Canadian Arctic and Alaska, as well as companies operating in remote locations in South America, Europe and Africa.

Boeing is designing and will fabricate a production SkyHook HLV prototype at its Rotorcraft Systems facility in Ridley Park, Pa. The new aircraft will enter commercial service after it is certified by Transport Canada and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration. The first SkyHook HLV aircraft is scheduled to fly in 2014.

SkyHook International Inc. is a privately owned company located in Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

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, and the world's largest and most versatile manufacturer of military aircraft. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $32 billion business with 70,000 employees worldwide.

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