Boeing AH-6i Light Attack/Reconnaissance Helicopter Makes 1st Flight

WASHINGTON, Oct. 7, 2009 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] today announced that the AH-6i light attack/reconnaissance helicopter successfully completed its first flight on Sept. 16, seven months after the company started work on the prototype aircraft.

During the 36-minute flight at the Boeing Rotorcraft Systems facility in Mesa, Ariz., the helicopter demonstrated its flight characteristics and several handling maneuvers.

Speaking today at the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) Annual Meeting and Exposition, Al Winn, Boeing vice president of Apache Programs, said that Boeing experimental test pilots have subsequently flown the helicopter over the Arizona desert on multiple occasions as they test the platform's capabilities.

"The AH-6i is based on a combat-proven airframe that special operations forces have deployed with great success," said Winn. "The successful first flight and our ongoing flight test program give us great confidence in the capabilities of this new international variant and its ability to meet the light-attack and reconnaissance requirements of our international customers.

"The rapid integration of the avionics suite and cockpit proves the value of the Boeing open systems architecture, originally developed for the AH-64D Apache Block III, to facilitate quick configuration and integration of new technologies," Winn added.

The AH-6i program, launched by Boeing at the 2008 AUSA meeting, is intended for international customers. The AH-6i features flexible mission configuration, an integrated digital cockpit, combat-proven design, the highest payload in its class, an integrated and qualified weapons system, and a communications package that enables connectivity with other aircraft and ground stations.

Boeing will produce the AH-6i at its facility in Mesa and is responding to inquiries from potential customers around the world.

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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Contact:

Carole Thompson
Boeing Rotorcraft Communications
Office: 480-891-2119
Mobile: 602-741-4802
carole.j.thompson-sutton@boeing.com

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