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CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Dec. 6, 2009-- Boeing [NYSE: BA] has acquired the first on-orbit signals from the third of six Wideband Global SATCOM (WGS) satellites. The signals indicate that the spacecraft is healthy and ready to begin orbital maneuvers and operational testing. WGS is the latest U.S. Department of Defense satellite communications system.

A United Launch Alliance Delta IV rocket launched the WGS-3 satellite at 8:47 p.m. Eastern time on Dec. 5 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. A ground station in Dongara, Australia, received the satellite's first signals 58 minutes later at 9:45 p.m. Eastern time. Boeing's Mission Control Center in El Segundo, Calif., confirmed that the satellite is functioning normally.

"This mission marks another important advancement in the communications capabilities that our advanced satellites provide to U.S. military personnel around the world," said Craig Cooning, vice president and general manager, Boeing Space and Intelligence Systems. "The nation's warfighters rely on satellites like this one to help them execute difficult missions safely and effectively, and the Air Force-Boeing team is committed to coming through for them."

Following a series of orbital maneuvers and on-orbit tests over the West Coast of the United States, WGS-3 will be placed into geosynchronous Earth orbit over the Atlantic Ocean. The satellite joins WGS-1, which entered service over the Pacific Ocean in April 2008, and WGS-2, which began operations over the Middle East in August 2009. The WGS-1 and WGS-2 satellites meet and, in some cases, exceed Air Force mission requirements. Together, the three WGS satellites will provide assured access to high-data-rate communications for U.S. forces and allies around the world.

WGS is the Department of Defense's highest-capacity communications satellite system. The satellites are built on the proven Boeing 702 platform with 13 kilowatts of power. The payload provides reconfigurable coverage areas and the ability to connect X-band and Ka-band users anywhere within their field of view via an onboard digital channelizer -- features not available on any other communications satellite.

Boeing is building three more WGS satellites for the Air Force with enhancements that include a radio frequency bypass designed to support airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms requiring additional bandwidth. Satellites four through six are planned for launch in 2011 and 2013.

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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