NASA Selects Boeing for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Award to Study Crew Capsule-based Design

HOUSTON, Feb. 2, 2010 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] was selected by NASA on Feb. 1 to develop critical technologies and capabilities for the space agency's Commercial Crew Development (CCDev) initiative, which offers an opportunity for the aerospace industry to develop concepts for future crewed space missions.

The funded Space Act Agreement for the CCDev project is valued at $18 million.

"We appreciate this opportunity to advance our crew system design," said Keith Reiley, Boeing CCDev program manager. "This agreement complements our internal efforts to accelerate development of system concepts and capabilities that will ultimately lead to a safe, reliable and cost-effective way to transport humans to low Earth orbit."

Boeing will research and further develop the system concepts and advance key technologies that are applicable to a capsule-based crew transport system. The company will develop the overall system definition, and also perform demonstration testing on life support, avionics, landing systems and other critical subsystems, primarily at sites in Texas, California and Nevada.

Boeing's crew module concept will be based on previous company efforts. It will be compatible with multiple launch vehicles and configurable to carry a mixture of crew and cargo on short-duration missions to and from the International Space Station, orbital habitats by Bigelow Aerospace and other future destinations in low Earth orbit. The size of the system is expected to be larger than the Apollo-era space capsule.

As part of the Boeing CCDev team, Las Vegas-based Bigelow Aerospace will provide requirements for crew transportation to support its planned Orbital Space Complex, as well as additional investment and expertise in testing and validating the technologies necessary to construct and deploy the complex.

"We're excited about this program and the Boeing partnership in general. Boeing brings with it unparalleled experience and expertise in human spaceflight systems, which will be combined with Bigelow Aerospace's entrepreneurial spirit and cost-conscious practices," said Robert T. Bigelow, president and founder of Bigelow Aerospace. "By combining these attributes, this partnership represents the best of both worlds."

NASA is using funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to fund its Space Act Agreements. By maturing the design and development of commercial crew spaceflight concepts and associated enabling technologies and capabilities, the CCDev program allows companies to move toward full demonstration of commercial human spaceflight to low Earth orbit.

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