Boeing Team Ships 1st SBSS Spacecraft to Launch Site

EL SEGUNDO, Calif., June 1, 2010 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] and its teammate Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. today announced that the first Space Based Space Surveillance (SBSS) system satellite has been shipped to Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., and is scheduled to launch on July 8.

The SBSS space vehicle was shipped to Vandenberg after completing a final factory functional checkout. It is currently undergoing final preparations for integration with its assigned Minotaur IV launch vehicle, while the team prepares for the mission dress rehearsal and on-orbit operations.

The SBSS system passed a U.S. Air Force Mission Readiness Review this past September, demonstrating that it met requirements and was ready for a scheduled launch on Oct. 30. A hardware issue with the Minotaur IV rocket forced the Air Force to postpone launch until this summer. The Air Force led an effort to resolve the issue, and the first Minotaur IV was successfully launched from Vandenberg on April 22.

The SBSS team maintained mission readiness during the delay by performing risk-reduction tasks that included additional operations exercises at Schriever Air Force Base, Colo., and testing at Ball Aerospace facilities. The team also initiated software enhancements to improve system performance.

"SBSS successfully completed a rigorous final systems integration and test process in preparation for last October's launch date," said Col. J.R. Jordan, vice commander, Space Superiority Systems Wing, U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles. "At every step, the government and Boeing team performed a thorough mission assurance review of the data, checking it against the standards of an operational system. This tough inspection gives us confidence that the system is ready to perform its mission in space."

Once on orbit, the SBSS system will provide significantly improved capabilities to track and monitor satellites, debris, and other objects in space that can threaten U.S. space assets that provide communications, navigation, weather forecasting, security, and other services. SBSS provides the Air Force with its only space-based capability for detecting objects without the limitations faced by ground-based sensors, such as weather and time of day. The satellite uses a digital sensor mounted on a high-speed gimbal to quickly find and track objects without having to reposition the entire spacecraft.

Boeing is the prime contractor for the SBSS system, providing overall systems engineering and integration, the Satellite Operations Center, and initial mission operations. Ball Aerospace developed, designed, manufactured, integrated and tested the satellite and sensor, using an onboard processor and software from Boeing.

"A groundbreaking program like SBSS takes a tremendous amount of teamwork and dedication to succeed," said Craig Cooning, vice president and general manager of Boeing Space and Intelligence Systems. "The fact that we were ready to deliver this satellite for launch less than three years after the Critical Design Review is a testament to the commitment of every person on the team. We look forward to launching this new capability and putting it into service for the United States."

"Ball Aerospace is proud to have developed an on-orbit dedicated sensor for situational awareness and delivered it to the Air Force and Boeing for its anticipated July 8 launch," said David L. Taylor, president and CEO, Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. "I believe once SBSS is on orbit and operational, it will prove to be a giant step forward in knowledge and security for our space assets and architecture."

Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. supports critical missions of important national agencies such as the Department of Defense, NASA, NOAA and other U.S. government and commercial entities. The company develops and manufactures spacecraft, advanced instruments and sensors, components, data exploitation systems and RF solutions for strategic, tactical and scientific applications.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Defense, Space and Security is one of the world's largest defense, space and security 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 Defense, Space & Security is a $34 billion business with 68,000 employees worldwide.

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