1st Boeing-built GPS IIF Satellite Enters Service with US Air Force

EL SEGUNDO, Calif., Aug. 30, 2010 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] today announced that the first of 12 Global Positioning System (GPS) IIF satellites the company is building for the U.S. Air Force has entered service. GPS IIF-1 is the newest member of the active 31-satellite GPS constellation, which provides accurate navigation, positioning and timing information to more than 1 billion military and civilian users around the world.

GPS IIF satellites offer new and enhanced capabilities, including a jam-resistant military signal, greater accuracy through improved atomic clock technology, and a protected civilian L5 signal to aid commercial aviation and safety-of-life applications. According to Air Force officials, on-orbit testing shows that the L5 signal meets all requirements. Based on program plans, the signal will remain in development status, broadcasting test data until initial operational capability is declared. The Air Force will send a message about this to GPS users worldwide.

"Putting the first next-generation GPS IIF satellite into operation is a significant step forward for the Air Force and the millions of warfighters and civilians who depend on this vital system," said Air Force Col. Bernard Gruber, commander, GPS Wing. "Now that IIF-1 is operational, military and commercial receivers around the world can begin using the satellite's improved signals to more accurately determine their position."

Launched on May 27, 2010, GPS IIF-1 has undergone three months of comprehensive on-orbit testing to validate its operations with the ground control system, other GPS satellites and a wide range of military and commercial GPS ground receivers. The satellite's testing regimen was longer and more rigorous than usual because it is the first of the series.

A Boeing space vehicle operations team based in Colorado helped the GPS Wing monitor and evaluate test results as GPS IIF-1 went through many of its first on-orbit operations. With testing complete, the GPS Wing has officially transferred Satellite Control Authority to the Air Force 50th Space Wing and the 2nd Space Operations Squadron, which will operate the satellite on its mission.

"Boeing has built 40 of the 61 GPS satellites launched since 1978, and GPS IIF is a great addition to that long legacy," said Craig Cooning, vice president and general manager of Boeing Space & Intelligence Systems. "These satellites make a difference by adding new levels of power and precision to GPS services. The IIF series will be the backbone of the constellation for the next 12 to 15 years."

Boeing is producing the next 11 GPS IIF satellites using an innovative pulse-line manufacturing approach adapted from the company's aircraft and helicopter assembly lines. The line enables faster, more efficient development of several satellites at once. The company also developed the current GPS ground control infrastructure, called the Operational Control Segment (OCS), which has supported an expanding set of GPS services and capabilities since 2007.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Defense, Space & 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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