Boeing to Mass-Produce Industry's Most Efficient Terrestrial Solar Cell

SYLMAR, Calif., Nov. 22, 2010 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] today announced that Spectrolab, a wholly owned subsidiary, has started mass production of its newest terrestrial solar cell, the C3MJ+. With an average conversion efficiency of 39.2 percent, C3MJ+ will be the industry's highest-efficiency cell.

The concentrator photovoltaic (CPV) cells -- used for renewable energy -- draw on Spectrolab's 50-year history of manufacturing solar cells for space and terrestrial applications and are an improvement on the C3MJ cells currently in production, which convert 38.5 percent of the sun's rays into energy.

"These more efficient cells are drawing interest from a number of current and potential customers," said Russ Jones, Spectrolab director of CPV Business Development. "Last year we set a new world record for efficiency with a test cell that peaked at 41.6 percent. We now have entered production with essentially this same technology and plan to deliver the first of these 39.2 percent efficiency cells in January."

Spectrolab has introduced mass production of a new series of solar cells with increased energy-conversion efficiency each year since 2007. The current C3MJ series entered production in mid-2009. More than 2 million C3MJ cells have been sold to customers around the world.

"Given the new cells' close similarity to our existing production cells, we believe that our current C3MJ customers will be able to easily upgrade for more efficiency," Jones added.

Spectrolab is the world's leading supplier of multi-junction photovoltaic solar cells, solar panels, searchlights and solar simulators and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. Spectrolab products have powered satellites since 1958 and have contributed to the on-orbit success of numerous commercial, national security, and civil space missions. Spectrolab's technological advancements have driven space solar cell efficiencies to more than 28 percent. Today, Spectrolab cells power 60 percent of all satellites orbiting the Earth, as well as the International Space Station. Spectrolab has made significant investments to meet the increasing demand of the terrestrial concentrator photovoltaic industry and expects to achieve a 40 percent average production efficiency for terrestrial solar cells in 2011.

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Contact:

Diana Ball
Boeing Space & Intelligence Systems
562-797-4303
diana.ball@boeing.com

Angie Yoshimura
Boeing Space & Intelligence Systems
310-364-6708
angie.e.yoshimura@boeing.com