New Boeing B-52 Upgrade to Increase Smart Weapons Capacity by Half

OKLAHOMA CITY, Nov. 6, 2013– Boeing [NYSE: BA] will continue to increase the B-52 bomber's effectiveness and versatility under a new U.S. Air Force contract that calls for the aircraft's smart weapons capacity to expand by 50 percent.

Under the $24.6 million agreement, Boeing will develop a modification to existing weapon launchers so the aircraft can carry smart weapons in the bomb bay, allowing aircrews to use the B-52's entire weapons capacity.

"When you combine that ability with the extremely long flying time of the B-52, you have an efficient and versatile weapon system that is very valuable to warfighters on the ground," said Scot Oathout, B-52 program director. "This weapons capacity expansion joins the CONECT program, a comprehensive communication upgrade currently being installed on the aircraft, to give the warfighter even more flexibility."

Boeing will produce three prototype launchers for test and evaluation. Initial capability is expected in March 2016, and potential follow-on efforts could add additional weapons and allow a mixed load of different types of weapons. Following the upgrade's first phase, the B-52s will be able to carry 24 500-pound Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM) or 20 2,000-pound JDAMs. Later phases will add the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM) and its extended range variant (JASSM-ER), as well as the Miniature Air Launched Decoy (MALD) and its jammer variant (MALD/J).

The bomb bay upgrade will also enable the B-52 to carry weapons internally only, increasing fuel efficiency in flight. The modernization work will use parts from existing Air Force rotary launchers repurposed for conventional missions, as well as hardware and software already developed for the wing pylons.

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 $33 billion business with 58,000 employees worldwide. Follow us on Twitter: @BoeingDefense.

# # #

Contact:

Jennifer Hogan
Global Services & Support
Mobile: +1 405-818-7859
jennifer.c.hogan@boeing.com