Lockheed Martin-Built Global Positioning System Satellite Launched Successfully By The U.S. Air Force

A Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite built by Lockheed Martin for the U.S. Air Force, was successfully launched today from Cape Canaveral. The satellite, designated GPS IIR-9, was the eighth successful launch of the new-generation GPS IIR spacecraft that will improve global coverage and increase the overall performance of the GPS constellation.

This satellite will join the GPS IIR-8 satellite launched on Jan. 29, 2003, which is now fully operational along with the 26 other operational GPS satellites now on orbit. Lockheed Martin has delivered 21 of these satellites to the U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif. to sustain the GPS constellation. 12 satellites remain in storage to support future launches.

"We are proud of our partnership with the Air Force in carrying out the important mission of the GPS system," said Manny Dimiceli, vice president of Lockheed Martin Space & Strategic Missiles. "We look forward to providing another excellent satellite with upgraded navigational capability for government, commercial and private users world-wide."

The Global Positioning System allows any properly equipped user to determine precise time and velocity and worldwide latitude, longitude and altitude to within a few meters. Although originally designed as a guidance and navigational tool for the military, GPS has proven beneficial in the commercial and civil markets for transportation, surveying and rescue operations.

The GPS IIR satellites are compatible with the current system and provide improved navigation accuracy, achieved by using an ITT Industries payload system. Additionally, increased autonomy and longer spacecraft life are inherent in the Lockheed Martin satellite design.

To bring new capabilities to the GPS constellation, Lockheed Martin is under contract to modernize up to eight existing GPS IIR spacecraft already built and in storage. These spacecraft, designated GPS IIR-M, will incorporate two new military signals and a second civil signal, thus providing military and civilian users of the navigation system with improved capabilities much sooner than previously envisioned.

GPS modernization is being performed at the Space Systems - Valley Forge, Pa. facilities and ITT Industries, Clifton, N.J. facilities. First launch of a GPS IIR-M satellite will be available by July 2004. The U.S. Air Force Space and Missile Systems Center, El Segundo, Calif., is the contracting agency.

Space & Strategic Missiles is part of Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, headquartered in Denver, Colo., one of the major operating units of Lockheed Martin Corporation. Space Systems designs, develops, tests, manufactures and operates a variety of advanced technology systems for military, civil and commercial customers. Chief products include space launch and ground systems, remote sensing and communications satellites for commercial and government customers, advanced space observatories and interplanetary spacecraft, fleet ballistic missiles and missile defense systems.

Contact: Steve Tatum 408-742-7531
Pager: 888-926-2912
stephen.o.tatum@lmco.com

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Web site: http://lmms.external.lmco.com/
