Lockheed Martin Deploys New Strategic Air Traffic Control System At Jacksonville Air Route Traffic Control Center

System Improves Flow of Air Traffic by Allowing Controllers To Resolve Potential Conflicts Far in Advance

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An advanced air traffic system developed by Lockheed Martin to improve the direct routing of aircraft was put into operational use today at the Federal Aviation Administration's Jacksonville Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC). Jacksonville is the first ARTCC to receive the powerful software tool under the national deployment of the system, which is the second phase of installation.

The User Request Evaluation Tool (URET) system detects potential conflicts with other aircraft up to 20 minutes in advance and can determine if pilot- requested changes to a flight plan are free of conflicts with other air traffic. This allows for increased strategic planning by controllers, enabling more direct routing of aircraft, deviations to avoid adverse weather and permits changes in altitude to take advantage of favorable winds. The automated system provides an improved planning capability for controllers and enhances their efficiency in maintaining and manipulating flight data. Prior to this system, controllers relied on paper flight progress strips. The system saves time, money and fuel for airlines and travel time for passengers.

"As the FAA modernizes the air traffic control system, Lockheed Martin is pleased to help develop advanced technologies to assist controllers in achieving a safe, orderly and expeditious movement of air traffic," said Don Antonucci, president, Lockheed Martin Transportation and Security Solutions. "We look forward to bringing the advanced technology of URET to the remaining Air Route Traffic Control Centers, which is another important step in the modernization of the National Airspace infrastructure."

In addition to predicting aircraft-to-aircraft conflicts, URET continuously monitors aircraft conformance to filed flight plans. It issues a controller alert 40 minutes in advance of when an aircraft is predicted to penetrate restricted or prohibited airspace. With the new capabilities, complex flight plan amendments that were once very keystroke intensive are now entered by a few simple clicks, saving the controller time.

Lockheed Martin received government acceptance of the Jacksonville system in May and spent the last three months familiarizing and training the air traffic controllers on the system. Under the first phase of the program, Lockheed Martin did a limited deployment to six ARTCCs: Kansas City, Memphis, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Chicago, and Washington, DC. Lockheed Martin is scheduled to deploy to the remaining 13 ARTCCs by 2005. The original six systems deployed to the ARTCCs under the first phase will also receive a technology re-fresh to ensure they have the most advanced system.

The FAA awarded Lockheed Martin a $204 million contract to fully develop URET in September 1999. Since then, Lockheed Martin has developed and tested over 600,000 lines of software code and integrated the system with two other major operational En Route National Airspace Systems, the Host system and the Display System Replacement (DSR). Both of these systems, also developed by Lockheed Martin, were simultaneously receiving their own planned enhancements and modifications to support URET. This type of complex integration is unprecedented in the FAA with systems of this size. Lockheed Martin also is responsible for URET training, hardware design and installation, and user support and maintenance at the ARTCCs.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 125,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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