Newest Lockheed Martin-Built GPS Satellite Begins Service For Navigation Users Worldwide

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Lockheed Martin and the U.S. Air Force have completed on-orbit checkout of the upgraded Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite launched successfully June 23 from Cape Canaveral. The spacecraft has been declared fully operational for military and civilian navigation users around the globe.

Built by Lockheed Martin in Valley Forge, Pa., the satellite, designated Space Vehicle Number (SVN) 60 and GPS Mission IIR-12, is the third Block IIR to feature a high-performance antenna panel designed to provide greater signal power to navigation users. The current constellation of 29 GPS satellites now includes 11 fully operational Block IIR spacecraft, which were developed to improve global coverage and increase the overall performance of the global positioning system.

The Global Positioning System enables properly equipped users to determine precise time and velocity and worldwide latitude, longitude and altitude to within a few meters. 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. Air Force Space Command's 2nd Space Operations Squadron (2SOPS), based at Schriever Air Force Base, Colo., manages and operates the GPS constellation for both civil and military users.

"This program is a tremendous example of the ongoing commitment to mission success and teamwork shared by Lockheed Martin and the Air Force," said Dave Podlesney, GPS program director for Lockheed Martin Space Systems in Valley Forge, Pa. "We take great pride in the reliability and performance of the IIR spacecraft and look forward to providing even more sophisticated navigation capabilities that will be offered by the upcoming IIR-M series."

The GPS IIR team is now gearing up for its next launch, scheduled for Sept. 22, 2004 from Cape Canaveral. Nine more of these satellites will be launched for the Navstar GPS Joint Program Office, Space and Missile Systems Center, to sustain the GPS constellation.

To bring new capabilities to the GPS constellation, Lockheed Martin is under contract to modernize 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 to provide military and civilian users of the navigation system with improved capabilities much sooner than previously envisioned.

GPS modernization is being performed at Lockheed Martin's facilities in Valley Forge, Pa., and ITT Industries in Clifton, N.J. The first launch of a GPS IIR-M satellite is scheduled for March 2005.

Lockheed Martin is also leading a team to develop the U.S. Air Force's next-generation Global Positioning System, GPS III. The team, which includes Spectrum Astro, Raytheon, ITT and General Dynamics, is currently under contract for GPS III concept definition and plans to compete for the future development.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2003 sales of $31.8 billion.

CONTACT:
Steve Tatum
+1-408-742-7531
Stephen.o.tatum@lmco.com

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