Commercial Remote Sensing Satellite Built By Lockheed Martin Achieves Nine Years In Service

The IKONOS commercial remote sensing satellite, designed and built by Lockheed Martin, today achieved its ninth year of on-orbit service and continues to provide high-resolution imagery of the Earth to commercial and government customers around the world. IKONOS is owned and operated by GeoEye of Dulles, Va.

The world's first commercial high-resolution imaging system was launched Sept. 24, 1999 with an anticipated life expectancy of five to seven years. In 2007, Lockheed Martin performed a life expectancy analysis for GeoEye and determined the spacecraft may continue to be fully operational into the next decade.

The spacecraft collects 0.82-meter resolution black-and-white imagery while simultaneously collecting just better than four-meter resolution multispectral data. These map-accurate images are used for applications in land management, environmental monitoring, local and regional government, national security, disaster relief, news gathering, and many other geospatial applications. IKONOS has collected the world's largest archive of commercial, high-resolution Earth imagery.

"We take great pride in the spacecraft's sustained record of performance in addition to the amazing ways the imagery has been used over the past nine years," said Jim Crocker, vice president of Sensing and Exploration Systems at Lockheed Martin Space Systems. "From high above, IKONOS truly broke ground on a new commercial industry."

Bill Schuster, GeoEye chief operating officer said, "This achievement demonstrates the viability of commercial remote sensing as a means to address the many important requirements our government and commercial customers have for high-quality, map-accurate satellite imagery."

IKONOS is based on the Lockheed Martin LM900 LEO, three-axis stabilized, remote sensing bus. At a weight of 1600 pounds (720 kg), it's a stable, highly agile, precision pointing spacecraft ideally suited for high-resolution remote sensing missions.

The small spacecraft and associated command and control, and mission planning ground system were developed by Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. The company designs, develops, tests, manufactures and operates a variety of advanced-technology systems for national security, civil and commercial customers.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2007 sales of $41.9 billion.

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