Lockheed Martin Achieves Key Software Milestone For Iridium NEXT Communications Satellite

Crucial Telecommunications Software on Track to Support 2015 Launch

GAITHERSBURG, Md., Sept. 24, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- A "switchboard in the sky" for the Iridium NEXT constellation of global communication satellites is one step closer to becoming reality as Lockheed Martin [NYSE:LMT] completed a major software design milestone. Lockheed Martin's Application Software for the Iridium NEXT constellation held the Critical Design Review, which showed that the design is at a high level of maturity and keeps this new generation of communications satellites solidly on schedule toward a first launch in 2015.

(Logo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20110419/PH85737LOGO-b)

The Iridium NEXT satellites are slated to replace those currently in the Iridium® constellation of 66 cross-linked low-Earth orbiting satellites. Iridium NEXT will provide continuous coverage over 100 percent of the Earth's surface as well as substantially enhance Iridium mobile communications services.

"Successfully completing this milestone verifies that the Iridium NEXT application software will operate as promised to deliver greatly enhanced telecommunications services," said Bob Kramer, vice president of Operational Systems & Services for Lockheed Martin Information Systems & Global Solutions-Defense. "The new software supports all capabilities currently available to Iridium subscribers and its modular design will allow 3G services to be seamlessly implemented into the new constellation."

Lockheed Martin, a member of the Iridium NEXT Mission Team under contract to develop and build the NEXT constellation of satellites, completed the Critical Design Review in September. During this review, the design for the application software, which performs the primary role in supporting subscriber services to user terminals, was rigorously reviewed by teams from Iridium, Thales Alenia Space and Lockheed Martin to ensure it will support all the functions needed for Iridium NEXT satellites. Lockheed Martin's architecture fully leverages a high performance multi-processor hardware platform and easily incorporates new services via insertion of software modules. This approach results in a satellite that is much more cost effective, modular and reconfigurable.

"Lockheed Martin's completion of the CDR is an important step in our progress toward providing Iridium users with next-generation capabilities," said Scott Smith, Executive Vice President, Satellite Development and Operations, Iridium. "The Iridium NEXT Mission Team will continue to work diligently to begin ushering in a new era of satellites to replace the current Iridium constellation."

"With this successful milestone, Lockheed Martin is on track to deliver the most comprehensive solution for the payload application software, meeting the challenging requirements for Iridium NEXT," said Nathalie Smirnov, VP Telecom Payloads & Systems of Thales Alenia Space. "We are proud to lead and coordinate this high class Iridium NEXT Mission Team."

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security and aerospace company that employs about 120,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation's net sales for 2011 were $46.5 billion.

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