



Iridium® Satellite Selects Three Finalists To Design and Develop Iridium 'NEXT'

Iridium® Satellite Selects Three Finalists To Design and Develop Iridium 'NEXT' BETHESDA, Md., March 19 /PRNewswire/ -- Iridium® Satellite is pleased to announce it has reached agreement with three companies to enter into the concept development phase in its design and development procurement process for "NEXT," the company's next-generation satellite constellation. Over the next five months, Lockheed Martin, Space Systems Loral and Thales Alenia Space will develop design concepts, review critical engineering trades and evaluate performance and capabilities required for NEXT along with the costs to manufacture and launch the system.

Based on these findings, Iridium plans to select two candidates to undertake the detailed system development phase of the procurement process.

"We are pleased to have these major industry players as potential partners in our NEXT development," said Lee Demity, executive vice president, Iridium NEXT, Iridium Satellite. "We would like to thank all the participants for their interest and their efforts in helping us make this first critical decision."

"Industry response has been phenomenal," stated Matt Desch, chairman and CEO, Iridium Satellite. "We're one step closer to launching our new constellation along with exciting new services for our customers."

This past summer, Iridium released a NEXT Request for Information (RFI) for design, development and deployment of the network and over 60 companies replied. From that RFI, six candidates were identified who have demonstrated the capabilities to meet the technical, operational and commercial requirements of NEXT. Of those six, Iridium narrowed the field to these three companies.

Last year at Satellite '07, Iridium unveiled its plans for NEXT and continues to make significant strides with its timeline and goals for the program. The response from companies vying for a role as a prime contractor or a supplier for this critical initiative has been overwhelming and the support from existing and prospective customers, potential investors and the market at large has been extremely enthusiastic. Based on analysis, industry feedback and progress to date, Iridium expects the 2013 launch date to be very achievable.

Today's Iridium constellation is the only mobile satellite service (MSS) covering the entire Earth, with no service gaps, providing voice and data communications for a wide range of users worldwide. NEXT will maintain Iridium's unique "lifeline" attributes which so many Iridium customers count on -- pole-to-pole coverage, security, availability and reliability.

Through NEXT, Iridium plans to offer a flexible array of services, from high-bandwidth data to voice and short messaging services, enabling new applications for commercial and government users. NEXT will feature an IP-based architecture. This will leverage broad-based technology enhancements from the industry, enable customers to integrate applications efficiently into NEXT, and ensure upgrading flexibility. Iridium will also engineer the network to support communications with other space-based assets. Finally, NEXT will maintain the company's unique and all-important cross-linked satellite architecture.

About Iridium Satellite

Iridium Satellite LLC (<http://www.iridium.com/>) is the only MSS offering gap-free, pole-to-pole coverage over the entire globe. Iridium's constellation of 66 low-earth orbiting (LEO), cross-linked satellites (and multiple in-orbit spares) provides critical voice and data services for regions not served by other communication networks. Driven by increasing demand for reliable, secure, global, mobile satellite links, Iridium has been steadily growing at a double-digit annual rate since 2004. Iridium serves commercial markets through a worldwide network of more than 150 partners, and also provides services to the U.S. Department of Defense, and other U.S. and international government agencies. The company's customers represent a broad spectrum of industry, including maritime, aeronautical, government/defense, public safety, utilities, oil/gas, mining, forestry, heavy equipment and transportation. Iridium has launched a major development program for its next-generation satellite constellation, called "NEXT," through which it will enable satellite-based innovations beyond communications. The company is headquartered in Bethesda, Md. and is privately held.

About Lockheed Martin

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company (<http://www.lockheedmartin.com/ssc/>), a major operating unit of Lockheed Martin Corporation, designs, develops, tests, manufactures and operates a full spectrum of advanced-technology systems for national security, civil and commercial customers. Chief products include human space flight systems; a full range of remote sensing, navigation, meteorological and communications satellites and instruments; space observatories and interplanetary spacecraft; laser radar; fleet ballistic missiles; and missile defense systems.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin 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.

About Loral Space & Communications

Loral Space & Communications is a satellite communications company. Through its Space Systems/Loral subsidiary, the company is a world-class leader in the design and manufacture of satellites and satellite systems for commercial and government applications including direct-to-home television, broadband communications, wireless telephony, weather monitoring and air traffic management. Loral also owns 64 percent of Telesat Canada, one of the world's largest providers of satellite services. Telesat Canada operates a fleet of telecommunications satellites used to broadcast video entertainment programming, distribute direct-to-home video and broadband data services, and other value-added communications services. For more information, visit Loral's Website at <http://www.loral.com/>.

About Thales Alenia Space

As a European leader in satellite systems at the forefront of orbital infrastructures, Thales Alenia Space (<http://www.thalesaleniaspace.com/>) is a joint venture between Thales (67 percent) and Finmeccanica (33 percent). Together with Telespazio, Thales Alenia Space forms the "Space Alliance" between the two groups. The company is a worldwide reference in telecoms, radar and optical Earth observation, defense and security, navigation and science. With 7,200 employees and 11 industrial sites, Thales Alenia Space is located in France, Italy, Spain and Belgium.

SOURCE: Iridium Satellite

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