



Iridium Selects Two in Competition for Design and Development Contract for 'NEXT' Constellation

Iridium Selects Two in Competition for Design and Development Contract for 'NEXT' Constellation BETHESDA, Md., Aug. 4 /PRNewswire/ -- Iridium Satellite LLC today announced it has selected two companies - Lockheed Martin and Thales Alenia Space - to participate in the final phase of its procurement process for the company's next-generation satellite constellation, "Iridium NEXT." Iridium chose Lockheed Martin and Thales Alenia Space as a result of their initial, innovative constellation design concepts; demonstrated understanding of performance requirements and capabilities; and preliminary cost estimates for the manufacture and launch of Iridium NEXT. The final phase will last approximately nine months and is anticipated to result in the award of a full-scale development agreement for Iridium NEXT with one prime contractor by the middle of 2009.

"The selection of Lockheed Martin and Thales Alenia Space is a major milestone for us," stated Matt Desch, CEO and chairman, Iridium. "This program reflects our commitment to the expansion of our amazing and very unique network, and to making our services even more powerful and cost effective for our customers as we replace our technical marvel of a network with an even more powerful one."

Iridium, with more than 285,000 subscribers, is the fastest growing mobile satellite services (MSS) provider and it offers a highly differentiated service capability. Iridium is unmatched for reliable, secure, near real-time worldwide communications and, as the only truly global mobile voice and data service provider, delivers a dependable and critical lifeline where no other communications reach. With Iridium NEXT, the company plans to not only continue advancing the way its customers do business through the use of Iridium services, but also to serve new markets.

"We are extremely impressed with our finalists' technical and creative design recommendations, as well as with their ideas for important enhancements to our existing service offerings," said Desch. "Both are identifying ways of meeting our Iridium NEXT requirements using advanced technology concepts. These concepts will help us realize cost effective ways of providing enhanced products, services and capabilities for our current customers, as well as for those new customers we plan to serve in the future - and the finalists are showing us they know how to do it in an affordable way."

Through Iridium NEXT, the company plans to offer a flexible array of new services in addition to continuing what it offers today. Iridium NEXT will maintain the company's unique and advanced cross-linked satellite architecture. It will feature an IP-based architecture, leveraging broad-based technology enhancements from the industry. In addition, Iridium NEXT has the potential to host multiple secondary payloads, which will broaden the scope of the network's capabilities while providing an additional platform for applications such as sensing, earth observation, and command and control.

About Iridium Satellite

Iridium Satellite LLC (<http://www.iridium.com/>) is the only MSS company offering gap-free, pole-to-pole coverage over the entire globe. The Iridium constellation of low-earth orbiting (LEO), cross-linked satellites provides critical voice and data services for areas not served by other communication networks. Iridium's subscriber growth has been driven by increasing demand for reliable, secure, global communications. Iridium serves commercial markets through a worldwide network of hundreds of distributors, and 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, Iridium NEXT, which will result in continued and new Iridium MSS offerings. 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 Thales Alenia Space

European leader in satellite systems and a major player in orbital infrastructures, Thales Alenia Space (<http://www.thalesaleniaspace.com/>) is a joint venture between Thales (67 percent) and Finmeccanica (33 percent). Thales Alenia Space and Telespazio embody the two groups' "Space Alliance." Thales Alenia Space sets the global standard in solutions for space telecoms, radar and optical Earth observation, defense and security, navigation and science. The company has a total of 7,200 employees and 11 industrial sites, with design and manufacturing facilities in France, Italy, Spain and Belgium.

SOURCE: Iridium Satellite LLC

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