



Iditarod Now Leverages Iridium-Based Tracking and Voice Communications Used by Enterprise Organizations Worldwide

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BETHESDA, Md. and ANCHORAGE, Alaska, March 4 [PRNewswire/](#) -- The same satellite technology being used to track vehicles, postal packages, airplanes, containers and supplies is now a mandated requirement for mushers participating in the 2009 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. The Iditarod Trail Committee (ITC), organizers of the race, tested Iridium-based tracking technology on several dog sleds in 2008. The ITC was so satisfied with the results, service and safety associated with the tracking capability that it mandated all mushers must mount an Iridium-based tracking device, provided by IonEarth, on their sleds. IonEarth is an Iridium value-added reseller (VAR). Roadpost, an Iridium Service Provider, is also supplying Iridium satellite phones to Iditarod staff for safety and operational purposes during this three-week, 1,000-mile race in some of the world's harshest weather and landscapes. "By arming Iditarod mushers and staff with Iridium-based race communications, we are continuing to bring a race based on a 10,000-year-old mode of transportation into the 21st century," said Stan Hooley, executive director, ITC.

This year's Iditarod competition kicks-off in Anchorage, Alaska on March 7. IonEarth has developed Iridium-enabled bi-directional global positioning system (GPS) tracking devices, which permit race organizers, volunteers, media and fans to follow the movement of all mushers in near real-time throughout the race at www.iditarod.com.

Recognizing the unique value proposition of Iridium's global low-latency data links for remote tracking and monitoring, the ITC turned to IonEarth to develop a system using the Iridium network. The committee will utilize Iridium's tracking technology to stimulate greater involvement by race fans, serve as a coordination tool for race organizers, as well as a safety device for veterinarians, medical personnel and rescue workers on hand for emergencies. Iridium-based voice and data communications provide the same reliable, critical lifeline to enterprise organizations around the world.

Iridium has been selected as the mobile satellite service (MSS) provider for the Iditarod because only Iridium guarantees service into the far northern latitudes -- and to the entire globe. No other MSS provides truly global communications services.

"Iridium-based voice communications have been a 'must' for years for organizations operating in remote locations, like portions of Alaska, where no other forms of telecommunication infrastructure exist," said Don Thoma, executive vice president, Marketing, Iridium. "Tracking assets and keeping in touch while on the ocean, in the air, and in oil fields, rural highways and through remote territories is critical for anyone who operates or lives outside the normal boundaries of cellular or land-based telecommunications infrastructure. In addition, Iridium data modems fit well into IonEarth's small, lightweight, efficient and reliable tracking units. For those watching the race, it not only provides status updates for an exciting competition, but also layers an added element of safety for family and friends of mushers and staff."

Iridium's global, pole-to-pole satellite communications coverage and unmatched network quality are the primary reasons Iridium has become the fastest-growing MSS provider. Iridium's subscriber base of mobile data users continues to grow, with its massive increase driven in large measure by enterprise organizations that require worldwide, economical low-latency data links for international asset tracking and resource management.

"Like many Alaskans, we know that only Iridium can work for this type of application -- in this unforgiving environment, at this latitude and with the necessary level of reliability," Hooley said. "IonEarth's remote tracking solution meets our demanding requirements for reliable operation under some of the most extreme weather conditions on the planet. This application not only brings the race into the homes of fans all over the world, it also simplifies our logistics and has the capacity to save lives."

The IonEarth device developed for the Iditarod consists of a miniature GPS receiver, Iridium short-burst data (SBD) modem, control electronics and lightweight, high-performance batteries especially designed for extended operation in severe temperatures. The devices will transmit position, speed, heading and temperature through the Iridium network to a central server every 15 minutes. Interested parties can log onto the Iditarod Website (www.iditarod.com) where they can view the latest information and location for each musher superimposed on a 3D terrain map of the trail.

Journalists, film crews and Iditarod race officials will be equipped with IonEarth terminals as well. These terminals will be wirelessly connected to handheld computers, allowing them to monitor the mushers and each other from remote locations without the need for an Internet connection. Race officials also will be equipped with Iridium 9505A satellite phones provided by Roadpost. Roadpost's event services team customized the packaging of Iridium phones for the Iditarod, including pre-loading a shared address book to the phones, pre-labeling phones with user names, and pre-printing business cards with the user's Iridium phone number to ease administration for event organizers. Easy-to-use

and durable, Iridium satellite phones provide the only satellite voice communications service that works everywhere in the world.

"In fact, some satellite phone users in Alaska are trading in handsets from other providers for Iridium phones because we're the only service that works effectively not only in all of Alaska, but globally," Thoma added.

About Iridium Satellite

Iridium Satellite LLC (www.iridium.com) is the only MSS company offering 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 terrestrial communication networks. Iridium's subscriber growth has been driven by increasing demand for reliable, 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 currently privately held.

About IonEarth

IonEarth LLC (www.ionearth.com) develops real-time satellite telemetry, situational awareness and communication technologies serving operations in difficult and remote environments. Examples include support for teams, organizers and media participating in long-distance international competitions such as the grueling Baja off-road races, as well as petroleum industry operations requiring the scattered deployment and coordination of assets and personnel. IonEarth is an Iridium VAR for integrated voice and data services.

About Roadpost Inc.

Roadpost provides global satellite and cellular communications to individuals, corporations, governments, institutions and international events. From the world's business centers to the most remote locations on Earth, thousands of organizations trust Roadpost to provide comprehensive voice and data communications solutions and value-added services that ensure complete global communications coverage for their employees. Roadpost's product portfolio includes an array of mobile satellite and cellular equipment and services, operating on the leading networks and offered on a rental or subscription basis. Founded in 1991, Roadpost has been an Iridium Service Provider since 1999.

About Iditarod

The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race (www.iditarod.com), which has been described as the "Last Great Race on Earth," runs from Anchorage, in south central Alaska, to Nome on the western Bering Sea coast. Seventy teams of 12-16 dogs and their mushers will cover almost 1,000 miles in 10-17 days, a homage to the mushers who, in 1925, helped deliver diphtheria serum to stricken Nome via the Iditarod Trail mail routes. The Iditarod covers some of the roughest, most-extreme terrain Mother Nature has to offer. Jagged mountain ranges, frozen rivers, dense forests, desolate tundra and miles of windswept coast test mushers and their dogs against everything wild in the Alaskan frontier.

SOURCE: Iridium Satellite LLC

Web site: <http://www.iridium.com/>

