



Iridium and H2OSatellite Provide Vital Communications Link for Beluga Shipping's Successful Northeast Passage Transit

BETHESDA, Md. and WARRINGTON, U.K., Oct. 14, 2009 -- Iridium Communications Inc. (Nasdaq:IRDM) and H2OSatellite provided critical satellite communications for Beluga Shipping's successful pioneering transit of the challenging Northeast Passage this summer. The Beluga ships relied on Iridium OpenPort(R) high-bandwidth marine satellite systems supplied by H2OSatellite for voice and data links throughout their voyage through the extreme Northern waterways, most of which are not reliably covered by any other long-range communication service.

The exact position the two Beluga Shipping heavy lift project carriers stated in an e-mail to the Russian administration was 70 degrees 16.7' North - 057 degrees 33.4' East as they completed the historic voyage. Regarded as the Northeast Passage's official exit in a westerly direction by the Russian administration, the MV "Beluga Fraternity" passed the Nowaja Semlja archipelago on September 12, 2009, and sister vessel MV "Beluga Foresight" followed, leaving this symbolic spot in its backwash on September 16, 2009.

"By the completion of the Northeast Passage transit, and previously the safe offloading of the cargo in a rather remote area in Siberia, we have opened the gate to a seaway which will further gain in importance in the future," said Niels Stolberg, founder, president and CEO, Beluga Shipping GmbH.

The prospect of a successful Northeast Passage transit has only recently become feasible during a limited summer thaw window. In line with its company philosophy and commitment to innovation in products and procedures, Beluga Shipping realized the potential of the Northern sea route and began planning the challenging project more than 12 months ago.

As part of the intensive work by Beluga's meteorologists, masters, chartering and operations departments, and safety and security experts, Beluga approached its satellite communications partner, H2OSatellite, to advise on the best equipment to ensure dependable, uninterrupted communications at high latitude. H2OSatellite, which provides both airtime and e-mail across the large Beluga fleet, had no hesitation in recommending the vessels be fitted with the new Iridium OpenPort high-bandwidth marine satcom system. Iridium OpenPort provides three independent voice circuits and a separate data connection scalable up to 128 kbps, all of which can be used simultaneously without interference.

As a former mariner, Robert Kenworthy, managing director of H2OSatellite, a Global Technology Ltd company, understood all too well the risks and challenges for the crews taking on the Northeast Passage and how crucial reliable communications were going to be.

"We knew that Iridium OpenPort was the only choice for full coverage in those extreme regions where other systems are patchy or non-existent," said Kenworthy. "Iridium OpenPort has the additional benefit of working with our new industry-leading, IP-based products which allow, amongst other things, crew Web browsing. The system allowed Beluga Shipping to stay in constant touch with its vessels, which is essential for safety and security in an area with drifting ice fields, ridges and freezing temperatures. Beluga also has a strong crew welfare focus and the Mail4Crew service means that during their much needed breaks, the crew were able to send and receive e-mail, SMS and even postal messages, to stay in touch with home."

The Beluga F-class vessels MV "Beluga Fraternity" and MV "Beluga Foresight," both 12,744 deadweight tons (dwt), carried crews of 15 or 16 men and transported power plant equipment destined for the city of Surgut. The specialist ice class E3 heavy lift carriers have up to 360 metric tons crane capacity and, amongst the cargo, generators and 44 power plant modules weighing in excess of 200 tons each. Having been the first company to successfully use the Northeast Passage as a commercial route, Beluga Shipping believes that the opportunity to cut 3,000 nautical miles off the common route through the Suez Canal means others might soon follow.

"Travelling the Northeast Passage is an ambitious and worthwhile project since it offers great advantages for saving time, bunker and thereby money, but also reducing environmentally harmful emissions which have to be decreased in the maritime sector," explained Stolberg. "The possibility of a direct seaway connecting the prosperous European and Asian markets offers unmatched opportunities for both strong cargo trade and efficient sea traffic, and Beluga Shipping was determined to make the possibility a reality."

"The Beluga ships provided an excellent testbed to demonstrate Iridium OpenPort's advanced capabilities in the extreme northern latitudes where other satellite systems cannot reach," said Greg Ewert, executive vice president, global distribution channels, Iridium. "This is a pioneering product for the maritime industry, and it has been proven to be a robust and reliable system for ships anywhere on the high seas."

About Iridium Communications Inc.

Iridium (www.iridium.com) is the only provider of mobile satellite communications services offering 100 percent global coverage. Iridium's constellation operates in a low-earth orbit and its satellite network provides communications services to regions of the world not served by wireless or wireline networks. Iridium offers voice and data communications services to the U.S. and foreign governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations and consumers via its constellation of 66 in-orbit satellites, seven in-orbit spares and related ground infrastructure. Iridium's commercial end-user base includes the emergency services, maritime, government, utilities, oil and gas, mining, leisure, forestry, construction and transportation markets. Iridium's products and related applications are installed in unmanned aerial vehicles, helicopters, commercial aircraft, marine vessels and ground vehicles. Iridium has launched a major development program for its next-generation constellation, Iridium NEXT, which will support new and existing Iridium product and service offerings. Iridium is headquartered in Bethesda, Md.

About H2OSatellite

H2OSatellite is the complete maritime communications partner with more than 2,000 ships already relying on its fully integrated, simple and cost-effective solution. Comprising a full suite of packages from commercial messaging, spam, virus protection and crew messaging, to hardware sales, installation and airtime, H2OSatellite enables its customers to communicate via any transmission package available including major satellite systems. Since 1998, previously known as Global Technology Ltd, the company has been in the vanguard of satellite communications software development offering customers industry leading returns on their communications investment. Key to the company's success is its focus on providing technology with a human face via its market leading 24/7/365 customer support, and a genuinely personal touch which ensures customers have solutions tailored for their specific needs.

H2OSatellite is headquartered in the U.K. with a comprehensive network of partners with offices worldwide.

About Beluga Shipping GmbH

Beluga Shipping GmbH is a project and heavy lift carrier with headquarters in Bremen, Germany, and 12 international branch offices. According to the Institute of Shipping Economics and Logistics, this innovative company is the world market leader in the project and heavy lift segment. The transportation specialist currently operates 66 modern multipurpose heavy lift project carriers with adjustable tweendecks, high ice class, moderate bunker consumption and crane capacities of up to 700 tons in tandem usage. As from October 2009 onwards, the new Beluga P-class, a series of specifically designed super heavy lift vessels, has left the docks. Crane capacities between 800 and 1,400 tons, as well as loading capacities of up to 20,000 dwt, set the benchmarks once again a lot higher. The experienced Beluga team of 1,300 highly qualified seafarers onboard, and 500 dedicated and experienced experts onshore in the chartering and transport engineering departments, provides for tailored transportation solutions that are professionally conducted in every port of the world -- whether it is a long and heavy demethanizer, a complex defractionator, structures and equipment for offshore platforms, modules for a plant system or a dismantled plant itself which has to be shipped, or whether the cargo has to be loaded from the pier onto the carrier or discharged from the ship onto a barge offshore. By applying innovative transportation solutions and flexibly conducting professional transport engineering with regard to customers' requirements, Beluga Shipping always finds a solid answer to any transportation challenge.

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