



Iridium Announces Successful Completion of First-Launch Iridium NEXT Satellites Activities and Second Launch Date

MCLEAN, Va., May 02, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Iridium Communications Inc. (NASDAQ:IRDM), the only communications company with 100 percent global coverage, has announced that the first set of [Iridium NEXT](#) satellites have been integrated into the operational constellation and are providing excellent service to Iridium customers. Prior to achieving this major program milestone, the new satellites went through a rigorous testing and validation process that demonstrated that they met all performance requirements and even exceeded many. The Iridium NEXT satellites are already providing superior call quality and faster data speeds with increased capacity to Iridium customers. In addition, the Company has announced the targeted launch date for the second payload of ten Iridium NEXT satellites as June 29, 2017, at 1:02pm PDT, with an instantaneous launch window. All planned Iridium NEXT launches will take place from SpaceX's west coast launch facility at Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB) in California, on Falcon 9 rockets.

The testing and validation process for the Iridium NEXT satellite constellation involved a thorough test of each of Iridium's services, an assessment of each satellite's performance against established metrics, and a formal acceptance process between Iridium and Thales, thus ensuring a smooth integration into Iridium's existing network architecture. Once completed for each new satellite, a precisely orchestrated process of replacing the original Iridium[®] satellite with a new Iridium NEXT satellite, known as a '[slot swap](#)' is completed. To date, the team at Iridium's Satellite Network Operations Center (SNOC) has successfully completed three individual slot swaps, and two dual slot swaps. Two of the new satellites are currently drifting to their assigned orbital plane.

"To say that I am proud of the Iridium satellite network operations team is an understatement," said Scott Smith, chief operating officer at Iridium. "Conducting multiple slot swaps to replace a network of this magnitude is an incredible task, and only Iridium has the team and technical capacity to manage this project. We have been preparing for this process for years, and since first launch the team has worked non-stop to manage each maneuver to successfully integrate the new satellites into the active network. We are thrilled to say that these new satellites are exceeding expectations and are already delivering faster speeds to our customers."

The Iridium NEXT satellites are manufactured by Thales Alenia Space, the prime contractor, and assembled at Orbital ATK's facility in Gilbert, Arizona. Thales Alenia Space has been tasked with certifying these next-generation satellite vehicles, all while maintaining a demanding manufacturing timetable to meet Iridium's launch schedule.

"We are deploying the largest satellite constellation in the world, and it works! We met challenges that were unprecedented in the space sector, in terms of end-to-end system performance and production rate," said Bertrand Maureau, executive vice president, telecommunication at Thales Alenia Space. "Seeing the satellites exceed our expectations and be smoothly integrated into the existing network was one of the top highlights in our company's history. Iridium NEXT is an extraordinary story, and we are both proud and greatly moved to have successfully passed this major milestone. In our industry, when things go as planned and even exceed expectations, it's an impressive achievement, and we are very excited to be looking forward to the second launch."

The late-June launch will deliver the second set of ten Iridium NEXT satellites into low-earth orbit, bringing the total count to 20 Iridium NEXT satellites in space. A total of 75 satellites will be launched over eight launches, and are expected to be completed by mid-2018. A network replacement of this size and scale has never been achieved before, and Iridium NEXT has been coined one of the largest "tech refreshes" in history. The new constellation is the first step in delivering Iridium's next-generation portfolio of communications services, called Iridium CertusSM, and will also introduce new revolutionary technologies and services like the AireonSM space-based ADS-B aircraft surveillance and flight tracking network.

To learn more about the process of a satellite "slot swap," visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsxWqRiC7m8>. For real-time updates about the Iridium NEXT program, please go to www.IridiumNext.com and follow Iridium on Facebook (Iridium Communications), Twitter (@IridiumComm) and LinkedIn (Iridium).

About Iridium Communications Inc.

Iridium is the only mobile voice and data satellite communications network that spans the entire globe. Iridium enables connections between people, organizations and assets to and from anywhere, in real time. Together with its ecosystem of partner companies, Iridium delivers an innovative and rich portfolio of reliable solutions for markets that require truly global communications. The company has a major development program underway for its next-generation network — Iridium NEXT. Iridium Communications Inc. is headquartered in McLean, Va., U.S.A., and its common stock trades on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the ticker symbol IRDM. For more information about Iridium products, services and partner solutions, visit www.iridium.com.

Forward Looking Statements

Statements in this press release that are not purely historical facts may constitute forward-looking statements as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. The Company has based these statements on its current expectations and the information currently available to us. Forward-looking statements in this presentation include statements regarding the timing for deployment, development and capabilities of the Iridium NEXT constellation and services to be offered over the constellation. Forward-looking statements can be identified by the words "anticipates," "may," "can," "believes," "expects," "projects," "intends," "likely," "will," "to be" and other expressions that are predictions or indicate future events, trends or prospects. These forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause the actual results, performance or achievements of Iridium to differ materially from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. These risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, uncertainties regarding potential delays in the Iridium NEXT deployment, the development and functionality of Iridium NEXT and related services, and the company's ability to maintain the health, capacity and content of its current satellite constellation, as well as general industry and economic conditions, and competitive, legal, governmental and technological factors. Other factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those indicated by the forward-looking statements include those factors listed under the caption "Risk Factors" in the Company's Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2016, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") on February 23, 2017, as well as other filings Iridium makes with the SEC from time to time. There is no assurance that Iridium's expectations will be realized. If one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or if Iridium's underlying assumptions prove incorrect, actual results may vary materially from those expected, estimated or projected. Iridium's forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this press release, and Iridium undertakes no obligation to update forward-looking statements.

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