HOME PAGE
CURRENT NEWS
PREVIOUS NEWS
SUBSCRIBE ITS FREE!
EVENTS
LAUNCH SCHEDULE
SEARCH THIS SITE
SITE MAP

ADVERTISING RATE CARD

Other Microcom Sites

MICROCOM SYSTEMS
SATELLITE INDUSTRY LINKS
SATELLITE ON THE NET
JOBS IN SPACE

23 February 2003

Satcoms

Eutelsat Inaugurates New Italian Teleport for Broadband Services
Gilat Continues Business Expansion in Latin America and Caribbean
iDirect Completes Transition and is Now Focused on Providing VSAT Technology
Loral Resumes Construction of Wildblue-1
ViaSat Receives Production Order from Connexion by Boeing

Earth Observation

Artemis Relays First Images for Envisat
Ball Aerospace Wins NASA Sensing Contracts
Integral Systems' Skylight Satellite Image System Purchased by NASA

Science

ESA's Rosetta mission, a Status Report
NASA Selects Next Medium-Class Explorer Mission

Manned Space

Aura Delivers Prototype Near Field Data Communication System to NASA
Raytheon Awarded US$ 79 Million NASA Contract to Support Astronaut Training

Technology

Lockheed Martin Awarded Patent for Solid Rocket Nozzle Throat Technology

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Satcoms

Eutelsat Inaugurates New Italian Teleport for Broadband Services

(21 March 2003) Eutelsat has officially inaugurated its new multimedia platform in Turin, Italy. Commercialised by Skylogic Italia, Eutelsat's Turin-based subsidiary, the platform is equipped for providing a full range of value-added broadband services for businesses, public administrations, service and content providers.

The new teleport facility, based in the city of Turin in north-west Italy, is connected to the Internet backbone through one of Italy's largest Internet nodes. It is operated in collaboration with Euphon, a leading international production and multimedia company that offers audio-visual facilities and production and post-production services for broadcasters and corporate users.

The platform is fully configured to provide users with one-way and two-way services including live streaming for business TV and corporate networks, multicasting of video and IP data, website updating and remote monitoring. It is connected to Eutelsat's Atlantic Bird 1 and W3 satellites that provide seamless coverage over a vast region stretching from North America to Europe, North Africa and central Asia. The gateway is also configured for Eutelsat's D-Star two-way broadband service that is fully compatible with the DVB-RCS open standard for satellite-based interactive networks. D-Star was recently used in conjunction with the Turin platform for providing voice, data and Internet access services on the island of Stromboli for Italy's Civil Protection Agency during a period of intense volcanic activity on the island.

Gilat Continues Business Expansion in Latin America and Caribbean

(19 March 2003) Gilat Satellite Networks Ltd has completed deployment of a fixed rural satellite telephony network for Empresa Nicaraguense de Telecomunicaciones (Enitel) to serve 170 communities throughout Nicaragua. The network is the largest known deployment of satellite rural telephony in Nicaragua.

The new Enitel network, based on Gilat's DialAw@y IP VSAT product, serves public payphone and fax kiosks, supporting the needs of agricultural workers and other inhabitants of Nicaragua's most remote villages who were living without basic communications services. Nearly 100 of the VSAT units are operated using solar power. Under terms of the agreement, Gilat is providing Enitel with equipment and turnkey implementation of the VSAT network. In the future, Enitel expects to use the network to provide high-speed Internet connectivity to many of those sites.

Gilat has also been selected by International Satellite Teleport (Intersat) to provide a 200-site broadband satellite communications

network in Haiti. Intersat expects to use Gilat's Skystar Advantage VSAT equipment and central satellite hub system to provide shared-hub services to companies in a variety of industries, as well as government agencies.

iDirect Completes Transition and is Now Focused on Providing VSAT Technology

(17 March 2003) iDirect Technologies, a privately held company that develops broadband IP hardware and software that enables the fastest, most reliable bi-directional Internet connections via satellite, has successfully transitioned its strategy to focus exclusively on providing premiere VSAT technology.

The company has been providing VSAT technology and is well known for its responsive customer support. To take further advantage of these qualities, the company has made a decision to migrate its service business to several iDirect technology enabled partners.

iDirect Technologies designs, develops, and markets satellite-based broadband access solutions targeted at the enterprise, government, carrier and educational sectors that have the need for fast, flexible, and geographically dispersed two-way internet/intranet access.

Loral Resumes Construction of Wildblue-1

(17 March 2003) Space Systems/Loral has resumed construction of WildBlue-1 for WildBlue Communications Inc of Denver, Colorado.

WildBlue recently announced that Intelsat, Liberty Satellite and Technology Inc, the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC), Kleiner Perkins Caufield and Byers and David Drucker, WildBlue's chairman, agreed to invest US$ 156 million in the company, which will allow WildBlue to enter commercial service in 2004 and complete its investment in the WildBlue-1 satellite.

WildBlue-1 is designed to provide consumers and small businesses in the United States fast and affordable two-way wireless Internet access using a mini-dish antenna. WildBlue-1 is currently scheduled to launch aboard an Ariane 5 launch vehicle.

WildBlue-1 will generate more than 10 kW of power at beginning of life, and will cover North America with 41 overlapping Ka band spot beams. Eight tracking antennas on board the satellite provide precision pointing of the beams over the contiguous United States. The 4.7 metric ton spacecraft will operate from the 109.2° W orbital position.

WildBlue-1 is based on SS/L's 1300 satellite platform and is designed to have a useful life of over 12 years.

ViaSat Receives Production Order from Connexion by Boeing

(19 March 2003) ViaSat Inc has received a production order from Connexion by Boeing for continued development and delivery of more than 100 airborne receive and transmit subsystems (ARTS). The engineering development will enable the ARTS design to be compatible with the next-generation antenna subsystem under development by Mitsubishi Electric Corp for Connexion by Boeing.

For the past two years ViaSat has been developing and delivering receiver and transmitter subsystems under contract to Connexion by Boeing. Ongoing service demonstrations on international carriers Lufthansa and British Airways are realising the vision of creating an "Internet connection in the sky." The timing of these airborne modem next-generation antenna modifications and deliveries enable aircraft installations early next year in preparation for Connexion by Boeing commercial service launch in 2004.

The Connexion by Boeing system will augment existing in-flight entertainment systems by providing real-time, two-way data and audio and video entertainment services, fulfilling the modern business traveller's need to stay connected to the office, the Internet, corporate intranets and news and financial information. Leisure passengers also benefit from having additional choices for how to spend their time during flight.

Earth Observation

Artemis Relays First Images for Envisat

(18 March 2003) The first satellite-relayed images from Envisat have been received, via the Artemis data-relay spacecraft in geostationary orbit, at ESA's data processing centre at ESRIN, near Rome.

For Artemis, the Advanced Relay Technology Mission, the image transmission caps a historic, 18-month recovery operation that brought the spacecraft to its assigned geostationary orbit after a July 2001 launch that left Artemis stranded in an orbit far lower than intended. Despite the lack of sufficient conventional propellant to raise the spacecraft's orbit, ESA engineers used Artemis' groundbreaking ion propulsion system, combined with innovative operations of its chemical thrusters, and succeeded in raising the satellite to its nominal geostationary position at 21.5° East.

Artemis carries payloads supporting land mobile communications, navigation systems and data relay systems. The spacecraft operates at S band (2 GHz), Ka band (26 GHz) and optical frequencies. Artemis and Envisat communicate at Ka band frequencies.

Setting up the operational data relay system in the Ka band between Artemis and Envisat is a first for Europe. The system proves the space qualifications of new technologies and operational procedures, along with demonstrating the complex software used in both the ground and space segments. It also shows the usefulness of data relay payloads.

Once testing of the inter-satellite link is completed, Envisat will transmit about half of its sensor data through Artemis straight to the Envisat data processing centre at ESRIN, starting at the end of April. Data from various instruments will continue to be downloaded to the Envisat ground station and data processing centre in Kiruna, Sweden, but the addition of the data relay satellite offers several important new capabilities to the Envisat data network.

The Kiruna ground station can "see" the satellite for about 10 minutes of Envisat's 100-minute orbit, and for 10 daily orbits. Because of its orbital position above Envisat, Artemis can remain in contact with Envisat on almost all its 14 daily orbits, and for longer periods.

Shifting a large portion of Envisat's downloads to Artemis for relay to ESRIN will ease the workload at Kiruna and thus reduce the time taken in processing information from Envisat's sensors to within three hours of the initial data acquisition. The use of Artemis will also enable ESA to increase the amount of data acquired by Envisat anywhere in the world, particularly in the case of the Advanced Synthetic Aperture Radar (ASAR) instrument, increase the flexibility of the mission's ground segment, and provide a back-up in the event of a problem with the onboard recorders, which will improve mission reliability.

Envisat recently marked its first year in orbit. Launched on 28 February 2002 from Europe's spaceport in French Guiana, it is the largest and most capable Earth observation satellite ever built. Its suite of 10 sensors is designed to provide a comprehensive view of the Earth's oceans, land, atmosphere and ice caps.

The optical data relay system will be used between Artemis and the French Earth observation satellite, SPOT 4, starting in April. In 2005 the Automatic Transfer Vehicle will start using a regular data relay service and in 2006 (to be confirmed) Columbus, the European element of the International Space Station, will establish data relay links to Artemis for nearly five hours a day.

Ball Aerospace Wins NASA Sensing Contracts

(21 March 2003) Ball Aerospace and Technologies Corp has been awarded three contracts to perform technology development of innovative Earth science remote-sensing instruments under NASA's Instrument Incubator Program (IIP). NASA reviewed 28 proposals for this technology development before awarding nine contracts.

Ball Aerospace staff consultant Tom Kampe was awarded a contract as principal investigator on the Spaceborne Infrared Atmospheric Sounder for Geosynchronous Earth Orbit (SIRAS-G). The SIRAS-G contract demonstrates technology that could form the basis of the Hyperspectral Environmental Suite, a sensor suite being procured to replace the atmospheric sounder instrument that is now part of the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites (GOES) system. GOES is a system of satellites that provide observations of the Earth's weather and environment.

Ball Aerospace teamed with Dr R Steven Nerem of the University of Colorado on the second award, the Interferometric Range Transceiver (IRT) for Measuring Temporal Gravity Variations. For IRT, Ball Aerospace is developing a high-precision inter-spacecraft ranging instrument designed to be flown as the follow-on to the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment mission that is currently on-orbit.

On the third winning effort, Ball Aerospace supported a Goddard Space Flight Center team led by Dr Scott Janz on the Geostationary Spectrograph (GeoSpec) for Earth and Atmospheric Science Applications. Ball Aerospace will procure and package the 2-D focal planes, design the interface electronics, and test the detector subsystem.

The NASA Instrument Incubator Program supports development of new and innovative technologies for the Earth Science Enterprise. The program focuses on technologies leading to smaller, less resource-intensive, and less expensive flight instruments.

Integral Systems' Skylight Satellite Image System Purchased by NASA

(19 March 2003) NASA Stennis Space Center has purchased Integral Systems Inc's Skylight Direct Broadcast Ground Terminal for receiving and processing satellite Earth science data. Using an existing NASA antenna, the system includes a receiver as well as data processing, storage, and analysis software.

NASA's Skylight system incorporates the most recently released NASA science algorithms for a variety of science data products, including fire detection maps, volcano eruption alerts, atmospheric profiles, and a variety of other data products. The highly automated system tracks, downlinks, and processes data from the MODIS Earth imaging instrument aboard the two NASA Earth Observation System (EOS) satellites, Terra and Aqua. Its data products can be searched for, distributed, and analysed entirely through a sophisticated web interface. The complete system will be delivered in April.

Skylight incorporates the powerful and very widely used ERDAS analysis package so that users can create their own added-value data products. The product enjoys a multimission capability, so that

support for satellites such as Landsat and Radarsat can be included later if desired by NASA.

Science

ESA's Rosetta mission, a Status Report

(20 March 2003) Following the decision not to launch Europe's comet chaser, Rosetta, in January, scientists and engineers in the programme have been examining several alternative mission scenarios.

Each has been looked at on the basis of the expected scientific return, the technical risks related to using the Rosetta design in the new mission, and the containment of costs.

Of the nine mission scenarios studied by the Rosetta Science Working Team, three have survived to this point and were presented to the delegations of the ESA Member States through the Science Programme Committee at its meeting on 25/26 February. Two mission scenarios (in February 2004 and 2005 respectively) would take Rosetta to a new target comet, Churyumov-Gerasimenko, while another (in January 2004) would take it to its original target, Comet Wirtanen.

All three options are now being studied in detail so that the final decision can be made. A campaign of observations using both the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope and the instruments of the European Southern Observatory is under way to study Comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko. In this way, astronomers will be able to characterise the comet and perform a mission analysis, also to identify landing scenarios and make a thorough assessment of any hardware modification that would be necessary.

In parallel, ESA is assessing the launch requirements for the various mission scenarios. This will include looking at alternatives to Ariane as back-up options, such as the Russian Proton rocket.

The final decision on Rosetta's new mission scenario will be made by the ESA Science Programme Committee in May.

NASA Selects Next Medium-Class Explorer Mission

(20 March 2003) A swarm of spacecraft, designed to fly through the space storms that cause aurora, has been chosen as the next mission in NASA's Medium-class Explorer (MIDEX) program.

The mission, to be launched in 2007, is the Time History of Events and Macroscale Interactions during Substorms (THEMIS). THEMIS is a five-satellite mission with the job of determining the causes of the global reconfigurations of the Earth's magnetosphere that are evidenced in auroral activity. THEMIS consists of 5 small satellites, carrying identical suites of electric, magnetic, and particle detectors, that will be put in carefully co-ordinated orbits. Every four days the satellites will line up along the Earth's magnetic tail, allowing them to track disturbances. The satellite data will be combined with observations of the aurora from a network of observatories across the Arctic Circle. Dr Vassilis Angelopoulos of the University of California will lead THEMIS at a total mission cost to NASA of US$ 173 million.

NASA also selected, as a mission-of-opportunity, an instrument for the Extreme Universe Space Observatory (EUSO) mission of the European Space Agency (ESA). EUSO will study the most energetic particles in the universe. Little is known about the explosive events that create these particles throughout the universe.

From its location on the International Space Station, EUSO will look down on the Earth's atmosphere to observe the characteristic blue light that high-energy cosmic rays generate after hitting the Earth's atmosphere. NASA will provide the largest Fresnel lens ever built for the EUSO telescope. Dr James Adams Jr of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center will lead the agency's contribution to EUSO at a total project cost to NASA of US$ 36 million.

NASA has decided to continue studying the Widefield Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE), a four-channel, super-cooled infrared telescope designed to survey the entire sky with 1,000 times more sensitivity than previous infrared missions. A decision on proceeding to flight development with WISE will be made in 2004. Dr Edward Wright of the University of California, Los Angeles, is the Principal Investigator for WISE.

The Explorer Program is designed to provide frequent, low-cost access to space for physics and astronomy missions with small to mid-sized spacecraft. The first two MIDEX missions are the Imager for Magnetopause-to-Aurora Global Exploration (IMAGE), launched in 2000, and the Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe (WMAP), launched in 2001. The third MIDEX mission, the Swift Gamma Ray Burst Explorer is scheduled for launch in December 2003. Swift will study the origins of black holes in gamma ray bursts, the most energetic explosions in the universe.

The selected proposals were among 31 MIDEX and 11 mission-of-opportunity proposals originally submitted to NASA in October 2001 in response to an Explorer Program Announcement of Opportunity issued in July 2001. NASA selected five proposals in April 2002 for detailed feasibility studies. Funded by NASA at US$ 450,000 each, these studies focused on cost, management, and technical plans, including small business involvement and educational outreach. NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center manages the Explorer Program for the Office of Space Science, Washington.

Manned Space

Aura Delivers Prototype Near Field Data Communication System to NASA

(18 March 2003) Aura Communications Inc has delivered a prototype data communication system using patented near field magnetic wireless technology to NASA. The system is to be evaluated for monitoring physiological status during astronaut EVA activities and re-entry.

Aura's magnetic communication technology provides reliable non-RF wireless communication that is free from interference, nulls and fades typical in RF systems. The technology works by creating a low power quasi-static magnetic bubble around a user that provides extremely low power communication for voice, audio or streaming data.

Aura's technology, is also being evaluated for the Objective Force Warrior program of the US Army. For military applications, the non-propagating nature of the magnetic wireless provides a highly

secure personal area communication environment that is virtually undetectable at longer ranges.

Raytheon Awarded US$ 79 Million NASA Contract to Support Astronaut Training

(20 March 2003) Raytheon Company has been selected to support facilities used to train astronauts and flight controllers on critical mission skills at NASA's Johnson Space Center (JSC) under a five- year contract valued at US$ 79 million including options.

Under the contract, which includes a two-year base period and three one- year options, Raytheon Technical Services Company LLC (RTSC) and team-mate Oceaneering International Inc, will provide real-time mission support, procedure development and verification, work-load limitations and hardware design and validation, as well as operation, maintenance and sustaining engineering for two human space flight training facilities-the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory and the Space Vehicle Mockup Facility-both at JSC in Houston. The Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory supports astronaut training for space walks using underwater mock-ups and pressurised suite to simulate weightlessness. Full-scale mock-ups in the Space Vehicle Mockup Facility are used to train astronauts for space flight.

RTSC also provides development, maintenance, operations and sustaining engineering for the Space Station Training Facility, which is used to simulate flight activities for both astronaut and flight controller training.

Technology

Lockheed Martin Awarded Patent for Solid Rocket Nozzle Throat Technology

(19 March 2003) The US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has granted Lockheed Martin a patent for a new and innovative, near-zero erosion, net-moulded ceramic rocket nozzle throat for solid rocket motors. The new ceramic material promises to improve solid rocket motor affordability and performance compared to the current state-of-the-art 4D carbon-carbon

material.

In 1997, Lockheed Martin Space & Strategic Missiles, Sunnyvale, California initiated an advanced materials technology development project to assess the feasibility of using ceramic materials in solid rocket motor nozzle throats as part of an ongoing company-funded Independent Research and Development (IRAD) program. The patent (Patent Number 6,510,694 B2) was issued on January 28, 2003.

Propulsion design engineers with the Fleet Ballistic Missiles (FBM) program teamed with materials scientists from the company's Advanced Technology Center in Palo Alto, California to develop and static test a ceramic as a low-erosion rocket nozzle throat material. FBM engineers are developing this high-temperature advanced ceramic material for potential use in future strategic missile-sized solid rocket motors, however, the new nozzle throat material also holds promise for other applications including tactical missiles and thrusters.

In a series of scale-up tests using throats specimens up to 2" in diameter and 300 lb rocket motors containing either Class 1.3 or Class 1.1 propellants, the Lockheed Martin ceramic demonstrated to have less than 0.1 mils/second erosion rate and outperformed (i.e., had less erosion than) 4D Carbon-Carbon by a factor of 20. The ceramic throat inserts were fabricated using a net-moulding technique, that is expected to provide a greater than 50% reduction in fabrication cost and procurement lead-time compared to those of Carbon-Carbon.

Additional tests of the cost saving ceramic throat technology are planned for the future. The ATC recently fabricated the largest ceramic-lined nozzle throat insert to date, a 5.2-inch throat insert that will be tested with an 800-pound, Class 1.1 solid rocket motor.

In January 2003, Technology Review - published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) - for the third consecutive year ranked Lockheed Martin first in the aerospace industry for the technological strength and innovation of its patents. Last year, USPTO issued 199 patents to Lockheed Martin from a total of 500 patent applications submitted by Lockheed Martin engineers and scientists.

Launch Services

Sea Launch Ready to Fly

(20 March 2003) Sea Launch President James G Maser has informed customers and insurers that Sea Launch is ready to resume flight, following the completion of the Sea Launch Failure Review Oversight Board (FROB) investigation into the failure of the ILS Proton Astra-1K mission.

Maser had grounded the Sea Launch fleet following the ILS Proton mission failure on November 26, 2002, when the Block DM upper stage failed to complete the second of three planned burns. Similarities between the ILS Proton Block DM and the Sea Launch Block DM-SL upper stages required that Sea Launch determine if there were any issues that would have an impact on the Block DM-SL.

A CIS State Commission recommended seven corrective actions to preclude similar failures in the future. The Sea Launch FROB concluded a thorough review of facts and data of the CIS State Commission and agreed with its findings into the root cause and resulting corrective action.

The members of the Sea Launch FROB found that six of the seven corrective actions either do not apply to the Sea Launch configuration of the Block DM or are already in place within the existing Sea Launch hardware, processes and quality assurance procedures.

Moving forward, Sea Launch will address the one corrective action that is applicable to the Block DM-SL. This corrective action provides for additional system level testing and inspection during pre-launch processing of the Block DM-SL.

SpaceX Performs First Rocket Engine Firing

(19 March 2003) Space Exploration Technologies Corporation (SpaceX) has successfully fired its Falcon rocket main engine.

In initial tests, the liquid oxygen and kerosene engine, named Merlin, achieved full expected thrust of 60,000 lbs and a combustion

efficiency of 93%. With further testing, the company expects to exceed a 96% efficiency level. This compares well with the much larger Saturn V Moon rocket's F-1 engine, which used the same propellant combination, but achieved only 93.5% efficiency.

The company's initial rocket, named Falcon, is being offered for US$ 6 million per flight to orbit - less than one-third the cost of currently available options. Although the Falcon design draws upon the ideas of many prior launch vehicle programs, SpaceX is developing the entire vehicle from the ground up, including both engines, the turbo-pump, the cryogenic tank structure and the guidance system. Falcon is a two-stage, liquid oxygen and kerosene powered rocket capable of placing half a ton into low Earth orbit in the basic configuration and one and a half tons with strap-on liquid boosters.

Falcon is expected to be ready for launch by late 2003, with the actual lift-off date subject to Air Force, NASA and FAA approval. Following this vehicle, SpaceX will develop a large three-stage rocket using the first and second stages of the Falcon as its second and third stages. That vehicle will compete in the heavy-lift payload class currently occupied by Arianespace, Boeing, Lockheed, China Aerospace and Russia's Krunichev.

Telesat Chooses ILS Proton Again

(19 March 2003) International Launch Services (ILS) has finalised a contract with Telesat to launch the Anik F1R satellite on a Russian Proton rocket in 2005.

The deal includes an option for launching an additional satellite. Financial terms were not disclosed.

The contract follows by less than three months the launch of Telesat's Nimiq 2 satellite in the first commercial flight of the Proton M/Breeze M configuration of the vehicle. The Anik F1R launch will also use a Proton/Breeze M vehicle.

The satellite is a Eurostar 3000 model being built by Astrium, Europe's largest space company. This type of spacecraft is currently being integrated on a Proton/Breeze M for another customer's mission.

Business

DirecTV Latin America Files for Chapter 11 Reorganisation

(18 March 2003) DirecTV Latin America LLC has filed a voluntary petition for reorganisation under Chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy Code. The filing applies only to DirecTV Latin America LLC, a US company, and does not include any of its operating companies in Latin America and the Caribbean, which will continue regular operations.

DirecTV is the leading pay television service in Latin America and the Caribbean with approximately 1.6 million subscribers in 28 countries. DirecTV Latin America LLC intends to continue providing its DirecTV service as normal without interruption across Latin America and the Caribbean.

DirecTV Latin America LLC is a Delaware limited liability company owned by DirecTV Latin America Holdings, a subsidiary of Hughes Electronics Corporation; Darlene Investments LLC, an affiliate of the Cisneros Group of Companies; and Grupo Clarin. The filing was made in the US Bankruptcy Court in Wilmington, Delaware.

Hughes has agreed to provide DirecTV Latin America with a US$ 300 million senior secured debtor-in-possession financing facility (subject to Bankruptcy Court approval) to supplement its existing cash flow and help ensure that vendors, programmers and other business associates receive payment for services incurred after the bankruptcy filing was made.

In early January 2003, DirecTV Latin America LLC announced it had initiated negotiations with certain programmers, suppliers and business associates in an effort to resolve issues that have affected the financial performance of the Company in recent years, including excessive fixed costs and a substantial debt burden during a time of economic deterioration throughout Latin America. The Company's decision to voluntarily file for Chapter 11 followed its determination that these negotiations would not achieve a satisfactory long-term outcome for DirecTV Latin America LLC.

In conjunction with the Chapter 11 filing, DirecTV Latin America LLC

has filed "First Day Motions" in the court in Wilmington to support its employees and vendors. These filings include requests to continue employee payroll and benefits as usual; to obtain interim approval of the DIP financing from Hughes and maintain existing cash management programs; and to retain legal and financial professionals to assist with the Company's restructuring. In addition, the Company intends to file motions seeking to reject certain executory agreements that it has determined to be uneconomic and not in its best long-term interest. These include contracts pertaining to Disney Channel Latin America, Music Choice and certain exclusive rights to broadcast the 2006 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament.

DirecTV Latin America LLC will continue normal business operations in its markets across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Gilat Announces Closing of Debt Restructuring Plan

(17 March 2003) Gilat Satellite Networks Ltd has closed its plan of arrangement with its bank lenders, holders of its 4.25% Convertible Subordinated Notes due 2005 (the "Old Notes"), and certain other creditors. At the closing, Gilat's Old Notes were cancelled and the holders of the Old Notes were issued a combination of 4.00% Convertible Notes due 2012 (the "New Notes") and ordinary shares of the Company. Additional New Notes and ordinary shares were also issued in exchange for a portion of the Company's bank debt and debt to another financing creditor. The ordinary shares issued at the closing are available for trading as of Monday, March 17, 2003.

As of March 17, 2003, a total of 259,757,196 ordinary shares of the Company are outstanding. The completed transaction reduces the Company's principal debt by approximately US$ 300 million, secures new agreements with its banking creditors, and significantly reduces overall financing costs. The Company intends to distribute shortly a proxy statement relating to a shareholders meeting that it expects to hold in April of this year, to approve, among other things (i) the implementation of a 1-for-20 reverse stock split, (ii) an increase of the Company's share capital, and (iii) the election of a slate of directors. The expected reverse stock split will reduce the number of outstanding shares of the Company to approximately 12,987,860 shares, based on the amount of outstanding shares as of March 17, 2003.

Products and Services

EMS Technologies and Stratos Partner to Sell Solutions to the Trucking Industry

(19 March 2003) EMS Technologies and Stratos have announced the signing of a reseller agreement. The agreement makes Stratos one of the principal resellers of EMS Technologies' suite of advanced satellite communications terminals, including the PDT-100 packet data satellite terminal used throughout the trucking industry.

With the partnership, Stratos now offers trucking fleets a total fleet management solution, using the EMS PDT-100 satellite terminal for GPS tracking and sending and receiving messages and data. The PDT-100, which weighs only three pounds, is extremely rugged and durable, due in part to an omnidirectional antenna and lack of moving parts.

The system communicates using Mobile Satellite Ventures' (MSV's) MSAT-1 satellite. Using MSAT-1's spot beam technology, MSV offers superior coverage and capacity. This technology turns all of North and Central America, northern South America, the Caribbean, Hawaii, and up to 250 miles offshore into a single, digital communications cell. As a result, MSV can deliver to end-users advanced and affordable communications from anywhere to anywhere.

In addition to hardware, Stratos sells the satellite airtime and the application software. As such, Stratos offers trucking professionals a total solution to their fleet management requirements.

The Geocom A.Maze solution is one of the applications Stratos is bundling with the PDT-100. The Geocom solution allows fleet managers to make significant savings on their operational costs by giving them the means to improve their asset management, eliminate useless movement of their assets, and improve the bottom line.

Globalstar Introduces New Fixed Satellite Phone Unit

(18 March 2003) Globalstar is introducing a new fixed phone unit in the US, offering dependable satellite voice communications at roughly half the price of the company's earlier fixed units.

The Globalstar FAU-200, manufactured by Ericsson, is a weather-proof fixed phone unit that can be installed in virtually any outdoor location, such as on the side of a building or on a stand-alone post. When attached to a power supply and a conventional telephone handset, the FAU-200 provides immediate access to Globalstar's satellite telephone network, providing reliable voice communications, even from remote locations far from any cellular or hardwire telephone network.

The FAU-200, which carries a list price in the US of US$ 999, can operate in extreme temperatures and environments, and each device can support up to three separate phone units, either hardwire or cordless, on a single line. Unlike earlier-generation satellite phones which required bulky directional antennas, the Globalstar FAU-200, like all Globalstar phones, has an omni-directional antenna that requires no calibration or aiming at all.

The Globalstar FAU-200 is type approved in the United States, the European Union and other countries, and it is registered with the International Telecommunication Union under the ITU's "GMPCS Memorandum of Understanding."

Norsat to Debut Next-Generation NewsLink SNG Terminal at NAB

(16 March 2003) Norsat International Inc will launch its next-generation ultra-portable SNG (satellite news gathering) terminal, the Norsat NewsLink at NAB (National Association of Broadcasters) 2003.

The new Norsat NewsLink terminal provides broadcasters with an enormous advantage in first-strike news reporting.

This next generation Norsat NewsLink has been significantly improved, not only in terms of portability, but also in flexibility and

ease-of-use. It is the first complete SNG solution capable of broadcast quality MPEG-2 video, which packs into small suitcases and can be checked as airline baggage on international airline carriers. This is possible due to the innovative design of its ultra-light segmented carbon fiber diamond antenna and aluminum tripod which can be assembled and aligned in minutes.

The latest Norsat NewsLink model also includes sophisticated and feature-rich baseband electronics in a compact 1RU enclosure. The new MPEG-2 encoder, designed by industry leader CJM2 Limited, combines exceptional quality with ultra-low latency making it ideal for live broadcasting and news gathering. The slim 1RU form factor of the baseband electronics allows it to easily integrate with a variety of voice and data communications options to further extend the capabilities of the Norsat NewsLink.

Choices for RF amplifiers, including a new 25 W model, have been specially designed for the Norsat NewsLink and are integrated into the antenna backplane, allowing this ultra-portable solution to achieve data transmission rates of 2-6 Mb/s even near the edge of the footprint.

The Norsat NewsLink includes features that make the system dramatically easier to use than traditional SNG solutions. The NewsLink incorporates unique and easy to use Microsoft Windows software with a new portable sunlight readable LCD screen and sealed keyboard that provides rich functionality such as a built-in dual-trace spectrum analyzer, carrier beacon detector, antenna alignment wizard, transmitter control, and alarming and diagnostic tools.

The simple operation of the Norsat NewsLink eliminates the need to include an RF engineer on an SNG assignment which is becoming increasingly important with modern newsgathering operations. For example, news teams are being invited for the first time to “embed” with the US military in the Gulf Region and are extremely limited in the number of people and amount of equipment that can participate. Clearly, the Norsat NewsLink is ideal for these kinds of SNG assignments. It will also find appeal in a broad variety of other circumstances due to its flexible and portable characteristics.

Major news broadcasters, including CBS News, are currently field testing a number of Norsat NewsLink terminals as part of embedded assignments in hostile environments like Kuwait. The field testing

has resulted in a number of enhancements to the product.

Norsat is currently accepting advance orders for the new product.

Remote Satellite Carrier Line-ups on a Wi-Fi PDA

(19 March 2003) IntegraSys SA has a wireless Internet based remote satellite carrier line-up tool that works on a commercial PDA and supports Wi-Fi, cellular or sat-phone connections to remote satellite monitoring stations via Internet.

The system has been designed for Two-Way Satellite Interactive Terminal (SIT) and VSAT installers to provide them with a pocket tool to perform the line-up and cross polarisation isolation adjustment on the uplinked carrier used for the return channel. The PDA acts as a remote graphics terminal to control a spectrum analyser and a solid-state input switching multiplexer located at the hub station from, virtually, any part of the world.

Users are connected to the monitoring station via wireless Internet and access the monitoring spectrum analyser's trace information on the PDA screen in real time. Several commercial spectrum analyser models from the main instrument manufacturers are supported by the system.

To avoid hub station co-ordination, the system includes a monitoring server computer and software to interface remote PDA users to the monitoring instrumentation. This server adds concurrent multi-user support, so one single monitoring analyser can support multiple simultaneous installations. Using standard Wi-Fi speeds (11 Mb/s) , up to ten concurrent users per instrument will obtain one analyser trace per second update rate, each using its own analyser set-up.

Stratos Announces High Speed Data Services in Fifth Ocean Region

(18 March 2003) Stratos has announced the addition of a fifth Ocean Region for Inmarsat services, Indian Ocean Region West (IND-W). Responding to traffic demands, Inmarsat and Stratos have implemented a solution to provide additional GAN high speed ISDN capability in the Indian Ocean Region.

Now, land mobile users who may have had difficulty accessing

satellite communications channels due to satellite congestion will have increased accessibility to Inmarsat satellite communications, which are critical for many diverse operations around the world. Presently, service is limited to GAN ISDN only, however additional service may be supported in this new Ocean Region should demand dictate this action. The establishment of Indian Ocean Region West (IND-W) is a temporary solution to meet traffic demands in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

People

Management Changes at DirecTV Latin America

(18 March 2003) DirecTV Latin America LLC has announced that Kevin N McGrath will retire as chairman, effective immediately. Larry N. Chapman has been named president and chief operating officer of DirecTV Latin America LLC, effective immediately. Chapman, who has been with Hughes Electronics Corporation since 1980, will report to Eddy W Hartenstein, chairman of DirecTV Latin America LLC and corporate senior executive vice president of Hughes.

Hughes, through its DirecTV Latin America Holdings subsidiary, owns 75 percent of DirecTV Latin America LLC.

DirecTV Latin America LLC also announced that in order to aggressively address the Company's financial and operational challenges, it has filed a voluntary petition for reorganisation under Chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy Code. The filing applies only to DirecTV Latin America LLC, a US company, and does not include any of its operating companies in Latin America and the Caribbean, which will continue regular operations.

In December 2002, Chapman was named corporate senior vice president of Hughes to work with Hartenstein and the DirecTV Latin America management team applying his exceptional expertise and experience to assist in evaluating and managing the DirecTV Latin America business consistent with the overall objectives of enhanced competitiveness and profitability.

A member of the original DirecTV launch team in the US, Chapman

was executive vice president in charge of DirecTV's Product Development, Marketing and Advertising organisations. In his Product Development role, Chapman was responsible for DirecTV's receiver development strategy as well as the development and deployment of advanced services such as digital video recording and interactive television. Marketing responsibilities included development and execution of customer offers and promotions, customer upgrade efforts, and customer loyalty programs. Advertising responsibilities included oversight of DirecTV's advertising agency, advertising strategy, brand management and media planning.

From March 2000 through August 2001, Chapman was president of DirecTV Global Digital Media Inc., a business unit of Hughes. Before his assignments with DirecTV, Chapman served in various business development roles at Hughes Communications Inc, a former satellite services subsidiary of Hughes Electronics Corporation. Chapman holds MS and BS degrees in electrical engineering from the University of Florida.

Notes for press and media officers:

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