

Boeing Delta IV Heavy Launch Successful

December 22 2004

The Boeing Delta IV Heavy made its first flight today achieving the major test objectives despite placing its demonstration satellite in a lower than expected orbit.

The Delta IV Heavy lifted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., at 4:50 p.m. EST, on a demonstration launch for the Air Force's Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle program. The demonstration satellite was deployed following a 5-hour and 50-minute flight.

The first planned launch attempt on Friday December 14 was pushed back due to poor weather conditions. The launch team is now awaiting the first available date on the range to reschedule the launch.

The Delta IV family blends new and mature technology to launch virtually any size medium or heavy payload into space, with the largest success being the now flight proven RS-68 engine. The vehicle is capable of pushing 13 tonnes of payload towards a geostationary orbit. Boeing spokesman Dan Beck said the Delta IV launch would still be the "first and only" demonstration of heavy-lift capability that was currently scheduled.

"The EELV program and Boeing invested in today's demonstration launch to ensure that the Delta IV Heavy, the only EELV Heavy variant available, is ready to launch our nation's most important national security payloads into space," said Dan Collins, vice president of Boeing Expendable Launch Systems. "While the demonstration satellite did not reach its intended orbit, we now have enough information and confidence in the Delta IV Heavy to move forward with preparations for

the upcoming Defense Support Program launch in 2005."

A preliminary review of the data indicates that a shorter than expected first-stage burn led to the low orbit. However, according to the Air Force EELV program office, the primary flight objectives were accomplished in today's all-up test of the new launch vehicle. The heavy boost phase, the new five-meter upper stage and five-meter payload fairing, extended coast, upper stage third burn and payload separation, and activation and usage of Space Launch Complex 37B for a Heavy launch were all successfully demonstrated.

"I want to thank our entire Delta team, including our government and industry partners," Collins said. "Their efforts, hard work and focus have once again moved our industry forward. We have a very happy and confident customer, thanks to all the hard work put in by this team."

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