Successful Third Iridium® NEXT Launch Brings New Services Closer to Life

All 10 satellites deployed, providing telemetry and beginning system checkout

MCLEAN, Va., Oct. 09, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Iridium Communications Inc. (NASDAQ:IRDM) announced today the successful third launch and deployment of 10 Iridium NEXT satellites. The satellites were delivered into low-Earth orbit approximately one hour after a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifted off from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California at 5:37 a.m. PDT. With two successful launches having already been completed this year, this third batch of 10 satellites brings the total number of Iridium NEXT satellites in orbit to 30, nearly half the amount required for a full Iridium NEXT operational constellation.

While already able to deliver fully global communications coverage, the Iridium constellation is undergoing a technological transformation. At the center of this transformation are three new capabilities; Iridium CertusSM, the company's new L-band broadband service; Aireon's space-based automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B) hosted-payload, that will provide real-time tracking and surveillance of all ADS-B equipped aircraft globally; and Harris Corporation and exactEarth's ship tracking service.

"Each successful launch brings us one step closer to both a technological and financial transformation," said Iridium CEO, Matt Desch. "One of our core strategies is to offer new services that are either flat out impossible or not easily replicated by more traditional "bent pipe" and geostationary systems. Satellite Time & Location, Short Burst Data® and Iridium PTT are just a few examples of global services only possible on our network. For us and our partners, Iridium NEXT is an engine for innovation, and services like these are just the start. Moreover, we're on track to completion in 2018."

Iridium NEXT is the company's next-generation satellite constellation, replacing and enhancing its existing network of interconnected, low-Earth orbit satellites spanning the entire globe — the largest commercial satellite constellation in space. The constellation's unique architecture features interconnected satellites that form a web of coverage around the earth, enabling connectivity over the oceans, in the poles and other remote areas.

The Iridium NEXT system and satellites have been designed and managed by Thales Alenia Space, serving as prime contractor for the program. The satellites are integrated at Thales Alenia Space's subcontractor, Orbital ATK's, satellite manufacturing facility in Arizona. Thales Alenia Space and Orbital ATK are managing a state-of-the-art, high production rate assembly line system, similar in approach to the process that built the first Iridium satellite constellation over twenty years ago.

Iridium and SpaceX are partnered for a series of eight launches, seven deploying 10 Iridium NEXT satellites at a time and one deploying five. A total of 81 Iridium NEXT satellites are being built, with 66 required for the operational constellation. A total of 75 satellites are currently planned for launch with nine of those serving as on-orbit spares and the remaining six as ground spares. The entire Iridium NEXT network is scheduled to be completed by mid-2018. For more information about Iridium NEXT, please visit [www.iridium.com](https://www.globenewswire.com/Tracker?data=yBRUhd_utKUnbwZC-58zxO1VksDg7bGYm-QqsvN6k6my9T2TvO1k47xOcG7qf0cSBJPdp7UdUaC6Br2p2K4-1g==).