

SBB launches new DTH TV platform on W2 satellite

Serbia and Montenegro

Serbia Broadband (SBB), the country's leading cable operator, has concluded a contract with Eutelsat Communications (Euronext Paris: ETL) to support a new Direct-To-Home (DTH) television platform for Southeast Europe. The contract concerns a total of 72MHz capacity (equivalent to two 36MHz transponders) on Eutelsat's W2 satellite positioned at 16 degrees East.

Called TotalTV, the new DTH platform will offer 25 television channels, including Serbian national and regional channels and international channels. SBB's objective is to reach homes in Serbia and Montenegro not already served by its cable system. It also plans to create special programme packages for neighbouring regions.

Commenting on the contract's signature, Dragan Solak, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SBB, said: "We are pleased to

be working with Eutelsat as part of our launch of DTH television service in Southeast Europe. As one of the largest and most dynamic television providers in the region, we look forward to offering our exciting package of exclusive entertainment and information channels to an expanded base of customers."

Giuliano Berretta, Eutelsat CEO, said: "With the launch of SBB's new DTH platform on W2, our 16 degrees East position is firmly anchored as the one of choice for digital broadcasting in eastern Europe and the Balkans. This satellite's proximity to Eutelsat's HOT BIRD™ neighbourhood, also presents excellent potential for reception of channels from both locations with double-feed antennas. We welcome SBB onto our system and look forward to supporting their objectives to complement cable distribution with their new DTH broadcast platform." □

Connexion by Boeing continues evolution

Connexion by Boeing ushered in the new year by announcing evolutions in its pricing and service enhancements for its real-time high-speed Internet and entertainment services to airline passengers in flight.

The service enhancements include an expanded delivery of four channels of live global television to airlines that offer the Connexion by Boeing service, and implementation of Yahoo! as the exclusive search engine on the service's portal used by passengers on flights to access the Internet and email. Pricing for the service will be simplified, giving passengers more flexibility with four choices based on the amount of time they want to be connected:

Internet Time

(Unlimited Internet access beginning at time of first sign-in)

- 1 hour US\$ 9.95
- 2 hours US\$14.95
- 3 hours US\$17.95

Internet Flight

24 hours US\$26.95

(Unlimited Internet access, including connecting flights within 24 hours of sign-in)

The new pricing, effective 31 January, is based on extensive customer research conducted individually, and in conjunction with, leading airlines in Europe, Asia and the US. □

SES Astra signs agreement with Top TV

Czech

SES Astra, an SES Global company, has signed an agreement with the Czech Free-To-Air (FTA) leisure and shopping channel Top TV for digital capacity on Astra at 19.2 degrees East orbital position.

Top TV is the fourth Czech FTA channel transmitted via Astra at 19.2 degrees East, following the music channel Ocko TV, the parliamentary channel 24.cz and the public news channel CT24. In addition to these customer relationships, SES Astra enjoys a long-standing co-operation with UPC Direct, the key Direct-to-Home (DTH) bouquet provider for the Central and Eastern European region.

Alexander Oudendijk, Senior Vice President (VP) and Chief

Commercial Officer (CCO) of SES Astra, said: "Our agreement with Top TV confirms our leading role in the highly competitive Central and Eastern European market. Top TV is an attractive enhancement of our free-to-air channel line-up and we look forward to a fruitful and successful co-operation." Katerina Fricová, General Director of Top TV, said: "Broadcasting Top TV via Astra at 19.2 degrees East will ensure that we reach the widest possible audience in the Czech Republic and across Europe in the highest quality. We are proud to become a member of the Astra family." Top TV is broadcast via transponder 57 on Astra 2C at 19.2 degrees East (10832.25 MHz). □

Demand for meshed networks boosts ND SatCom's VSAT systems

Global

ND SatCom, a leading global supplier of satellite-based broadband Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT), broadcast and defence communication network solutions, has sold its 5,000th SkyWAN system.

This achievement shows ND SatCom's targeted responsiveness to the market's demand for meshed and hybrid network topologies. In 2005, more than 1,100 systems were delivered. Customers in more than 130 countries use individually tailored SkyWAN systems in different branches; this includes air traffic control, oil & gas, the maritime sector as well as government and defence institutions.

"ND SatCom is proud to have reached this milestone of 5,000 sold SkyWAN systems. We have made major efforts to further improve our advanced technology also for GSM and the broadcast & media markets", comments Dr Gerhard Bommas, Chief technology Officer (CTO) at ND SatCom.

A new software version provides extended functionality and more flexibility for SkyWAN. Main new features include the support of cross strapped transponders with an extended network size of more than 510 nodes. Further on, the software improves QoS for VoIP and IP Video multicast sessions. The serial port speed has now been increased to support up to 6Mbit/s with up to 120 GSM calls per port.

SkyWAN is a very flexible and versatile MF-TDMA VSAT system to establish wide area corporate network infrastructures including IP Router as well as FR switch functionality. Standard user interfaces such as Ethernet and Frame Relay, voice/fax, serial synchronous and asynchronous connections are available and ready for applications based on these standards providing a unified network infrastructure. Internet Protocol (IP) applications such as web access, IP Video, or Voice over IP are fully supported. □

Astrotech to process Astra 1KR

US/Europe

Spacehab's Astrotech subsidiary will be providing payload processing services to Lockheed Martin's International Launch Services (ILS) for the Astra 1KR satellite.

Astra was initially set for launch on a Proton launch vehicle. With a recent change in the type of spacecraft model to be flown, a launch vehicle switch was made and the satellite will now fly aboard Lockheed Martin's Atlas V. Spacehab's Astrotech subsidiary in Titusville, Florida provides facilities and payload processing support for the Atlas program and will now open its doors to Astra and its team this February in order to support an April 2006 lift-off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

"We welcome the ILS and Astra teams and we are excited about showcasing our recent facility upgrades that will help us exceed their payload processing needs as well as those of our other customers," stated Jim Royston, Deputy General Manager of Astrotech Space Operations. In support of ongoing gov-

ernment contracts, Astrotech has been able to increase its facility capabilities and is nearing completion of significant facility enhancements including advanced security capabilities, communications and cleanroom improvements, and the addition of a large capacity conference centre.

Spacehab's Astrotech team is not only able to provide unique, commercially operated facilities, but is also leveraging existing competencies to offer new mission support services. "We have seen increased demand for services such as propellant operations, logistics, hardware transportation, import and export, and safety and site surveys," added Royston.

"Not only are we expanding these capabilities in Florida and our California operations at Vandenberg Air Force Base, but also in various international locations such as Baikonur, Russia," he concluded.

The Astra mission comes on the heels of a recently awarded NASA mission, THEMIS, which was the third mission outlined in

the US\$4.9 million Indefinite-Delivery, Indefinite-Quantity (ID/IQ) contract that NASA initiated with Astrotech in September 2005. The Company is currently negotiating the follow-on ID/IQ contract to support NASA's spacecraft processing needs through 2010. This agreement is expected to be valued at approximately US\$10.0 million.

"I am proud of the numerous accomplishments our Astrotech team has achieved," stated Michael E. Kearney, Spacehab President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). "With a busy manifest through 2007 at our Sea Launch operating location, new business and capabilities at our Vandenberg and Titusville facilities, and viable opportunities for growth, this business unit is exceeding its operating goals for the fiscal year."

In addition to these latest missions and pending contract, Astrotech is pursuing new business endeavours such as NASA's Commercial Orbital Transportation Service (COTS) Demonstration solicitation supporting the commercial process-

ing and transportation of provisions and hardware to the International Space Station (ISS).

"Since most competing teams vying for this contract will rely on Atlas or Delta launch vehicles to transport goods to the space station - both of which are processed at our east coast campus - Astrotech is poised to support the two to three missions per year procured under the ensuing Space Act Agreement that NASA expects to issue," added Kearney.

Astrotech, named last year's NASA Kennedy Space Center Small Business Contractor of the Year, is the leading commercial provider of satellite launch processing services in the US. With operating locations at all major US launch locations, Astrotech accommodates a wide range of customer payloads as well as the payload fairings and payload adapter assemblies of the launch service providers.

This approach allows for maximum flexibility in the processing of parallel missions and accommodating schedule changes. □

SkyTerra Communications acquires remaining interest in HNS

US

SkyTerra Communications' wholly owned subsidiary, Hughes Communications, Inc. (Hughes), has completed the purchase of the remaining 50 per cent of Hughes Network Systems, LLC (HNS) from The DirecTV Group, Inc. for US\$100 million in cash.

To finance the transaction, Hughes borrowed \$100 million from Apollo Investment Fund IV, L.P. and Apollo Overseas Partners IV, L.P., (Apollo), stockholders of SkyTerra. Concurrently, with the closing, HNS paid DirecTV \$10 million to resolve certain post-closing adjustments related to the initial purchase by SkyTerra of its 50 per cent interest in HNS. Prior to the transactions, SkyTerra completed its

previously announced internal restructuring by transferring substantially all of its assets and liabilities other than its interest in the MSV Joint Venture, Terrestrial Networks, Inc. and certain designated cash, to Hughes, which SkyTerra has announced it expects to distribute to its stockholders as part of a special dividend distribution during the first quarter of 2006. Concurrent with the special dividend, Hughes is expected to conduct a rights offering to its stockholders in order to repay the loan from Apollo. In connection with such a rights offering, Apollo has agreed to subscribe for the maximum amount of shares of common stock allocated to it, including the exercise of pro rata over-sub-

scription rights. The exercise by Apollo of its rights would occur by converting the unpaid principal and interest under the Apollo loan into a number of shares of common stock based on the subscription price in the rights offering, which has not yet been determined. The unconverted principal and interest obligations would be repaid in cash immediately following the consummation of the rights offering.

The special dividend and the expected rights offering are subject to a number of conditions including clearance from the Securities and Exchange Commission, final approval and the setting of a record date by SkyTerra's Board of Directors and Hughes'. □

Radyne bags US\$1m Xicom amplifier order

US

Radyne Corporation's Xicom Technology subsidiary received a new order of over US\$1 million for Tri-band Satellite Amplifiers from a major US Satellite Communications Integrator.

The amplifiers will be used in an existing mobile satellite program for the US Military. The order is expected to ship over the next two quarters.

"Xicom's Tri-band satellite technology continues to be the dominant solution for military customers," said Bob Fitting, Radyne's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). "Xicom has shipped more Tri-band amplifiers than anyone else in the industry," he concluded. □

SSPI announces winners of the 2006 Industry Innovators Awards

US

The Society of Satellite Professionals International (SSPI), the professional development society of the global satellite industry, has announced the winners of its 2006 Industry Innovators Awards. According to SSPI Board Chairman Richard Wolf, the Awards were introduced in 1993 to recognise new and different designs, applications, activities and contributions to the satellite industry from both the private and public sectors of the \$100 billion dollar industry.

The awards will be presented at a ceremony on Tuesday, 7 February beginning at 6:30 pm at the Grand Hyatt Washington. Participating in the ceremony will be David McGlade, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Awards sponsor Intelsat; Mark Dankberg, CEO of ViaSat; Dr. Dumrong Kasemset, Executive Chairman of Shin Satellite and other industry leaders. The winners and categories are:

Service Development & Applications

- Telenor Satellite Broadcasting - For

continuous innovation in its Nordic, European and Middle Eastern service area, from digital TV to IP via satellite to HDTV; and

- The American Red Cross - For the innovative use of VSAT-based systems to direct and manage deployment of disaster relief teams, and to provide direct assistance to disaster victims.

Systems Development & Applications

- XTAR - For introducing a new business model for meeting the specialized satellite communications needs of government and military customers through a commercially developed and operated X-band system; and
- e-Mexico - To the Mexican government's Ministry of Communications and Transportation for using satellite technology to provide the country's large rural population with affordable access to Internet

and IP services.

Technology Development & Applications

- IPSTAR - To Shin Satellite for design and implementation of the first satellite and ground system dedicated to the next generation of broadband satellite services; and
- ViaSat - A special award in the field of standards for application of the DOCSIS cable data standard to satellite communications.

The 2006 Industry Innovator Awards ceremony is sponsored by Intelsat, and will take place immediately before SSPI's Gala 2006 at the Grand Hyatt. Each year, the black-tie Gala brings over 1,200 decision-makers from the satellite industry to the Grand Hyatt Washington in Washington, DC on the opening night of Access Intelligence's SATEL-LITE 2006 convention.

Honorees are selected by a committee of industry experts, chaired by Dr. Joseph Pelton, Director of the Space & Ad-

vanced Communications Research Institute at George Washington University, for accomplishments ranging across a spectrum of advanced satellite technology and business applications.

Past winners include XM Radio and Sirius Radio for the introduction of DARS service, the Global Positioning via Satellite system, Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, Conus Communications for the development of satellite news gathering (SNG) trucks, and NASA for the Advanced Communications Technology Satellite. □

SSPI (www.sspi.org) is a nonprofit, member-benefit society that serves satellite professionals throughout their working lives. The programs of the Society promote the development of, and access to, high-quality education; help satellite professionals to advance their careers; recognize and celebrate extraordinary achievement; and stimulate the growth of the industry.

XTAR to provide communications services to Danish Armed Forces

Denmark/US

XTAR, LLC has announced that it has been awarded a multi-year contract from HISDESAT Servicios Estratégicos, S.A. (HISDESAT) to provide the Royal Danish Navy (RDN) with X-band communications services throughout Europe, Africa and the Middle East. XTAR is a joint venture between Loral Space & Communications (NASDAQ: LORL) and HISDESAT. The initial five-year agreement will provide the RDN with capacity either in right- or left-hand circular polarization on the XTAR-EUR satellite, ideally located at 29 degrees East longitude.

"By taking advantage of XTAR's right- or left-hand polari-

zation, the Royal Danish Navy will be able to use its new, state-of-the-art dual-polarization terminals," said Miguel Angel Primo, Chief Operating Officer, HISDESAT. "The use of both polarizations on the XTAR satellite essentially doubles throughput compared to older, single-polarization satellites, making available much needed X-band capacity."

In addition to being Loral Space & Communications' joint venture partner in XTAR, HISDESAT acts as XTAR's exclusive sales agent to certain Western European ministries of defense.

Denis Curtin, Chief Operating Officer (COO), XTAR LLC,

said: "The agreement with the RDN is a direct result of the unique industry and government partnership that XTAR and HISDESAT have achieved with its joint venture.

Denmark is now the second European nation to use XTAR-EUR following the company's initial contract with the Spanish Ministry of Defense."

In May 2005, XTAR was awarded a contract with the US Department of State's Diplomatic Telecommunications Service Program Office (DTS-PO), Fairfax, Va., to provide X-band communications services to embassies and consulates in Africa and Asia. The DTS Network provides responsive, reliable, se-

cure, and cost-effective telecommunications services to users at more than 260 sites around the world, representing nearly 50 US government entities.

Government entities

In 2005, XTAR demonstrated its high-power X-band service to branches of the US military and other allied governments. Using legacy equipment, test results from XTAR-EUR have consistently shown data rates that far eclipse current military X-band systems. With minor antenna and terminal modifications, XTAR has achieved data rates in excess of 100Mbit/s using both left and right hand polarisations. □

EADS Astrium selects Ariane for Skynet 5C

UK

EADS Astrium has selected Arianespace's Ariane 5 for the launch of the third UK Ministry of Defence's (MoD) next-generation secure military telecommunications satellite, Skynet 5C.

The EADS Astrium's in-orbit delivery contract follows Paradigm Secure Communications recent amendment to the existing Skynet 5 Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with the UK MoD.

The launch contract was signed at the end of December 2005. Arianespace was previously selected in 2004 for the launch of the first two Skynet 5 satellites - Skynet 5A and Skynet 5B. The launch of Skynet 5A is scheduled for the second half of 2006 with 5B in 2007 and 5C in 2008.

Skynet 5A and 5B will replace the existing Skynet 4 satellites, also built by EADS Astrium, which are already owned and operated by Paradigm Secure Communications.

In December 2005 Paradigm signed an amendment to the Skynet 5 contract to provide increased value for money to the UK MoD. A key feature of the amendment was to mitigate the

effect of changes in the insurance market through the order and launch of a third satellite, Skynet 5C, and associated increased concession period until 2020. Paradigm Secure Communications, part of EADS Space Services, signed a £2.5 billion PFI contract with the MoD UK in October 2003 for the provision of military satellite communications services

EADS Astrium is Europe's leading satellite system specialist. Its activities cover complete civil and military telecommunications and Earth observation systems, science and navigation programmes, and all spacecraft avionics and equipment.

EADS Astrium is a wholly owned subsidiary of EADS Space, which is dedicated to providing civil and defence space systems. In 2004 EADS Space had a turnover of Euro 2.6 billion and 11,000 employees in France, Germany, the UK and Spain.

EADS is a global leader in aerospace, defence and related services. In 2004, EADS generated revenues of Euro 31.8 billion and employed a workforce of more than 110,000. □

Euro 400 million contract for Ariane 5 boosters

EU

EADS-Space Transportation and Europropulsion (50 per cent Avio and 50 per cent Safran) have signed a contract for the production of 30 pairs of boosters for the European Ariane 5 launcher.

The contract has a total value of about Euro 900 million, of which Euro 400 million is part of a subcontract with Avio for the production of components of cutting-edge technology for the boosters, such as the solid-fuel propellant, thermal protection and igniters. Avio has the complete responsibility for the performance of the boosters, which guarantee 90 per cent of the thrust at launching and for over two minutes until their release, which takes place at a height of 65km and a speed of Mach 3.

"This, for Avio, is the most important contract regarding the space activities, during the last few years," said Pier Giuliano Lasagni, Head of Avio's Space Division. "This signing ensures the Ariane production over the next five years, starting from the January launch, and an important confirmation of the confidence in the commercial success of Ariane 5."

This success represents a certainty and an assurance for

those who build the future of the European launcher. A closer future thanks to the decision of the Member Countries of the ESA who approved important financing for the new launchers during the recent inter-ministerial conference.

Avio is present in Italy and abroad with 14 plants and 4,800 employees. It works in four sectors of activities: modules and components for aircraft engines, civil and military engine overhauling services, space and aircraft-derived turbines for marine applications. It is a world leader in power transmissions and Italy's leading operator where both aircraft engines and solid propellant space propulsion systems are concerned. In 2004, company turnover totalled 1,220 million Euros. □

Glowlink

Glowlink has announced the roll-out of a geolocation product with integrated interference detection and monitoring capability targeted for the satellite communications market. □

Globalstar launches static IP/VPN service for enterprise data customers

Globalstar, the world's most widely used handheld satellite phone and a provider of satellite voice and data services to business, has launched Static Internet Protocol (IP) address and Virtual Private Network (VPN) capability for its satellite data customers throughout the US, Canada, and the Caribbean.

The new services are possible due to enhancements at various gateway ground stations located throughout North America.

Once Static IP is set-up, a single IP address is assigned to a customer's Globalstar modem, delivering a constant address and affording greater communication possibilities through the Globalstar network. With the introduction of the Static IP service and associated data modems, Globalstar customers will now be able to initiate the transmission of data information or poll their various fixed and mobile assets located throughout North America, even when those assets are located in remote areas, well beyond standard terrestrial wireless or wireline coverage.

The Globalstar Static IP address modems will communicate to specific IP addresses using the new VPN service and the introduction of the VPN service will provide Globalstar customers with an enhanced level of security when making use of the Internet.

"This is another important step for Globalstar, as we continue to meet our customer's demands and grow our suite of satellite voice and data solutions," said Jay Monroe, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Globalstar LLC. The new services are ideal for large corporate customers who require VPN email access. Customers with Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) and other telemetry monitoring requirements will also be able to use the service to initiate access to their various remote assets.

Monroe went on to add, "The satellite data industry is one of the fastest growing areas of our business, with our simplex data customer base growing by approximately 300 per cent in 2005. These duplex data announcements will only continue to strengthen our overall position in the marketplace." Pricing for the new service adheres to the Globalstar commitment to deliver satellite affordability to the marketplace. □