



2008: a brief glance back

We are soon to wave goodbye to 2008. It has been a challenging year on many different levels and the satellite industry has been steadily busy and productive. At this point, we are looking into 2009 and preparing ourselves for a worldwide recession but the satellite industry is in a strong position to cope with the downturn. This year, in the Asian region we have seen many developments. The most encouraging has to be the fact that regional launches have taken place and are planned for the future. The regional operators are keen to meet the demand for satellite services and to increase their fleets. New operator, ProtoStar, lofted their ProtoStar-1 satellite for the DTH market and MEASAT will launch MEASAT-3a in the near future after its initial launch was postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. Incidentally, MEASAT took the title of Regional Operator of the Year at the 12th World Summit for Satellite Financing in Paris. ABS is also planning to launch a new satellite in 2011 – this is all proof that the demand for satellite services remains high in the Asian region and that the operators are constantly developing and launching new capacity.

The maritime sector has been a key market for the satellite industry in 2008. Operators such as SingTel and Thuraya have both launched innovative and highly successful products and suites of services. SingTel's Office-at-Sea has taken off very well in 2008 and has led to their collaboration with Becker Marine Systems to develop cutting edge maritime solutions. The introduction of Thuraya's ThurayaMarine terminal has made maritime communications much more affordable and along with their expanded coverage area holds great promise for the company in the Asian region.

The nature of the Asian region means that it is always at the leading edge of new technological developments and we have continued to see convergence of technology. Mobile TV, IPTV and High Definition were buzzwords of 2008. Speedcast partnered with Alcatel Lucent to develop, deploy and operate a hosted DVB-H platform for Mobile TV operators in Asia. IPTV is gaining momentum and the idea of converged services in the home is becoming reality. The crisp, clear and stunning HD pictures have amazed viewers and satellite systems and service providers are ensuring that they can provide their customers with HD capabilities.

All in all, it has been another exciting year for the industry. However, we also must remember the hugely valuable role that the satellite industry played in the disaster recovery effort after the devastating Sichuan earthquake earlier this year.

Thank you for your support of Satellite Evolution Asia in 2008. We look forward to bringing you the latest news and views of the satellite industry in 2009. ■

Helen Jameson
Editor

