



BOEING GRAPHIC

# Service station

Meet the Boeing team that maintains complex networks for communications, data

By BRAD MUDD

When the White House needs secure communications, Boeing Service Company is there. When warfighters on the ground need to know exact geographic locations, Boeing Service

Company helps make it happen. When fans of American football settle in for an NFL game on DIRECTV, Boeing Service Company makes sure they don't miss a play.

A subsidiary of the Integrated Logistics division within Integrated Defense Systems' Support Systems business, Boeing Service Company and its 1,500 people handle jobs as varied as tasking communications satellites to readying payloads for launch into space to maintaining classified government facilities. BSC simply works to successfully maintain and sustain its customers' systems.

"We are a very fast, nimble and agile business with a broad range of capabilities,"

An artist's rendering shows an Iridium communications satellite on orbit above Earth. Boeing Service Company doubled the expected life of the Iridium satellites and helped make the network profitable.

said Greg Deiter, director of BSC. "For Integrated Defense Systems, we're unique. We are totally service-oriented, with military and government customers as well as customers in the commercial sector."

## ROOTS FROM THE 1960S

The roots of BSC date back more than 40 years as the classified-program business for

Collins Radio Company. It was later part of Rockwell Collins before becoming Boeing North American Services Inc. in 1996. Based in Richardson, Texas, BSC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Boeing. While program leadership may work in northern Texas, only 300 employees call that location home. BSC has small groups of people supporting programs in 21 different locations, mostly working in customer-owned facilities.

The core of BSC's work involves its experience maintaining complex communications and data networks. The Iridium constellation of about 70 communications satellites is one example of how the business has been successful.

Iridium was originally started in the mid-1990s by another company and was intended to have 200 satellites on orbit handling voice and data communications worldwide, mostly for cellular phones. But the bubble burst for the business and Iridium was sold for pennies on the dollar. BSC then doubled the expected life of the satellites and helped the network turn profitable in 2006 by finding U.S. Department of Defense customers to use the satellites for streaming information between ground stations. The bottom line: BSC found a way to make it work.

"One of the keys is the flexibility in the organization—being able to go into a new city and set up an operational capability in a fast period of time, sometimes in a matter of days," said Gary Grogan, director of BSC Special Programs. "Most other companies would have a tough time doing that."

BSC also supports rocket launches at Cape Canaveral, Fla., and Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., and plays a role in the Ground-based Midcourse Defense program. Several contracts are classified and cannot be discussed publicly.

#### FITTING INTO BIG PICTURE

Several long-time BSC employees have been affiliated with the same program for many years, sometimes decades. The business is still executing on contracts signed 30 or 40 years ago when the business was originally formed.

"BSC employees can easily see how they fit into the big picture, especially with some of our long-term programs," Deiter said. "Those who work on classified communications programs know they play a direct role in protecting national security. It's a small group of people, but they're very proud of the work we do. Our people feel like they own the division they work in."

Software Engineer Jean Christopher has worked on secure communications programs for Rockwell and now Boeing for

25 years. She currently works on a White House specialized communications system.

"One of the things I like most about my job is that I really like the customer we work for," Christopher said. "The customer has been willing to change the system and make

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—U.S. Air Force. Lt. Col. Mike Harms, the GPS Architecture Evolution Plan development director, on Boeing Service Company's capabilities

it more modern. There hasn't been any stagnation working on this program."

Don Scott is the site manager for BSC at Vandenberg on the GMD program. His group is responsible for joining the kill vehicle with the booster rocket and emplacing the missiles in silos the group also has prepared. When their work is done, the silos at Vandenberg in California and Fort Greeley in Alaska are handed over to the warfighter. While the pace of the program is aggressive and frequent travel to Alaska can become hectic, Scott said his team is dedicated to performing.

"I have a lot of retired military people working on this team," Scott said. "When you ask them why they do this job, they say they're proud to help defend the country."

Despite having a wide range of programs covering different disciplines, BSC has focused on meeting the needs of each individual customer. During a meeting earlier this year, U.S. Air Force. Lt. Col. Mike Harms, the GPS Architecture Evolution Plan development director, talked about his views on BSC's performance.

"Boeing regularly finds the best-value method for meeting our mission and is an exceptionally good steward of our funding," Harms said. "We often count on Boeing to solve other issues that are not clearly within its responsibilities."

When contracts are put out to bid by a potential commercial or government customer, the determining factor always comes down to executing at a reasonable cost. Deiter said BSC is positioned to give the best value now and in the future.

"We work really hard at keeping our infrastructure costs as low as possible, yet at the same time making sure we maintain the highest levels of skills in our organization," Deiter said. "Because of this approach, we are able to provide the productivity improvement some customers are looking for at two-thirds of the cost."

"That's what Boeing Service Company is all about." ■

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From a control room in Leesburg, Va., Boeing Service Company employees track the location of Iridium communications satellites and manage the health of the system.