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DENVER, April 19, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- The first Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT) LM 400, a versatile, mid-sized satellite which can be adapted for military, civil or commercial uses, has successfully completed Electromagnetic Interference/Electromagnetic Compatibility testing. This trial is crucial to ensure that signals from the satellite bus components will not interfere with critical payloads during operations.

"This successful testing of LM 400 helps prove the satellite's design integrity and operational capabilities," said Malik Musawwir, Lockheed Martin Space's satellite center of excellence vice president. "This is a significant accomplishment for this new satellite and the space vehicles that will leverage this platform from our advanced digital LM 400 production line."

"The LM 400's digital design allows for multiple versions to be seamlessly produced -- including a 'flat satellite' that will support rapid launching of up to six stackable space vehicles at a time," adds Musawwir. "These types of 21st Century Security agile deterrence capabilities will provide our customers with maximum flexibility for their missions."

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, Lockheed Martin Corporation is a global security and aerospace company that employs approximately 116,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

Lockheed Martin is gearing up to launch a demonstration mission for its new LM 400 -- a common, mid-sized satellite bus that the company plans to use in future bids for Defense Department contracts.

The bus will be launched into low-Earth orbit (LEO) onboard a Firefly Aerospace Alpha rocket in the first half of 2025, Jeff Schrader, Lockheed Martin Space's vice president of strategy and business development, told reporters Wednesday. Although it will carry a communications payload, the intent for the self-funded mission is "to show that we've built a system, the [technology readiness level] has been burned down, how long we can actually plan to be able to build those in the future to offer to our customers," Schrader said.

For decades, the Pentagon has used a small number of large, exquisite satellite buses for its space missions that have become increasingly more costly and time-consuming to build. As demand for space-based warfighting capabilities continues to grow, the department has shifted its strategy and is now focused on buying smaller, less expensive satellites in larger numbers -- such as those acquired for the Space Development Agency's Proliferated Warfighter Space Architecture (PWSA).

Schrader said Lockheed Martin developed the LM 400 over the last three years to serve as a "middle

ground” between the two options, allowing customers to carry additional power and payloads than smaller satellites while still keeping price tags low.

“For our tracking layer bids, we’ve had to use certain class buses for smaller [electro-optical/infrared] sensors,” Schrader explained. “This allows us to actually maybe grow that a little bit to get more coverage for EO/IR type of missions for missile warning [and] missile tracking.”

The satellite bus is also customizable to support different missions — including remote sensing, communications, imagery and radar — as well as orbits and launch configurations, according to the company.

As a common bus, the LM 400 is “going to have a significant amount of componentry that is exactly alike, no matter who the customer is,” Schrader said. “That allows us to go out to our supply chain, be able to cut long-term agreements with them and be able to put something in a shorter amount of build time, as well as get after a more proliferated approach.”

Development of the LM 400 was driven by Ignite, Lockheed Martin’s self-funded innovation unit that conducts experiments both on- and off-orbit as a way to accelerate space technology for potential government customers. The company’s Pony Express 2 tactical satcom and TacSat space-based 5G missions were also conducted under Ignite.

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