February launch agreed for Globalstar

(Oct 4 2012)

Globalstar has announced that it has agreed an early February 2013 launch date with its launch services provider, Arianespace, for the deployment of its second-generation constellation.

The launch, from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, will be the fourth launch for this constellation, with three second-generation satellite launches already completed.

Satellite manufacturer Thales Alenia Space has confirmed that the review and shipment of the six spacecraft to be launched will be completed by the end of October, allowing pre-launch preparations to begin at the Cosmodrome for an early February launch.

Globalstar says that a launch during the first week of February would allow it to place two of the new satellites into service almost immediately after launch.

All but one of the previously launched satellites had been placed into service by the end of September. The company notes that the one remaining satellite is already in its operational plane and is awaiting the upload of a software upgrade to remedy a previously reported momentum wheel issue.

Globalstar says it expects to receive the software upgrade from Thales in mid-October, upload it into the satellite and then place it back into operation. This upgrade will also be made available for Globalstar’s other second generation satellites, if necessary.

“Since Globalstar embarked on a mission to be the first MSS provider to launch a second-generation LEO constellation, nothing about this process has been quick or easy,” said Jay Monroe, chairman and CEO of Globalstar.

“After six long years, we are proud to report that the finish line is within reach. Although the deployment of our new constellation with its improved design and capabilities has had its challenges, we can finally look forward to the long-term reliable service the new constellation will provide to our customers.”

“We thank all of our partners for their tireless effort and our customers and distributors for their patience and support throughout the project.”