DoD Extends Contract for ORAN-based Private 5G Networks through 2025

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Contract Extension Awarded for 5G Deployments at bases in Washington and Hawaii to Help DoD Evaluate 5G Applications and LEO/GEO SATCOM Resiliency

ENGLEWOOD, Colo., March 18, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, EchoStar (Nasdaq: SATS) announced the contract period of performance extension by the Department of Defense (DoD) Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSD(R&E)) FutureG Office, for the continued deployment of standalone 5G networks at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam (JBPHH) in Hawaii and at the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI) in Washington State. The contract extension builds on the award for NASWI in 2021 and additional expansion in Hawaii in 2022, extending both through 2025 with additional 5G enhancements. EchoStar is a premier supporter of the use of Open Radio Access Network (ORAN) in DoD networks and recently won a $50M NTIA grant to build an ORAN test center.

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"The award extension demonstrates the value of this multi-vendor solution and follows the successful launch of the 5G network at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island – the first 5G ORAN at a U.S. DoD base," said Dr. Rajeev Gopal, vice president, Advanced Programs, Hughes. "Together, the NASWI and Hawaii site configurations demonstrate the power of 5G standalone ORAN networks to support increasingly automated base operations, securely and with the resilience necessary to maintain information assurance in any circumstance – holding tremendous promise for DoD applications."

EchoStar subsidiary Hughes leads the deployments as the prime contractor, integrating standards-based, best-of-breed components, like radio access, edge cloud, and a packet processing core, with Zero Trust Architecture (ZTA) and seamless, global satellite connectivity augmented by embedded Network Operations Capabilities (NOC) and Security Operations Capabilities (SOC). The project is using ORAN infrastructure and engineering expertise along with EchoStar's 5G spectrum. There are transport routers, switches, and firewalls from Cisco; computing infrastructure from Dell Technologies; radio access network (RAN) from JMA Wireless; edge cloud stack and Intel® Xeon® processors from Intel; and site survey and network installation services from Boingo Wireless.

Rick Lober, vice president and general manager, Hughes Defense, said: "The DoD's extension of the 5G award is a validation of the EchoStar bench of engineering expertise and our ability to customize solutions using best available technologies across terrestrial and non-terrestrial systems. We are proud to join our industry partners in architecting, deploying, and operating the prototype networks that will set the foundation for 5G standalone ORAN and resilient networks for the DoD going forward."

The initial NASWI deployment was completed with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on March 30, 2023 to commemorate the launch of the standalone 5G network. The deployment improves aircraft readiness by enabling immediate, real-time communication coordination across the flight line to reduce maintenance time and decrease preparation time between missions.

Both deployments are designed to support National Security Agency (NSA) Commercial Solution for Classified (CSFC) requirements. This contract extension comes under an Other Transaction Agreement (OTA) issued through the Information Warfare Research Project (IWRP) consortium as part of on-going 5G experimentation led by the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (OUSD(R&E)) FutureG Office.

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