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Big Bend Telephone Company installs new EXPLORER MSAT-G3 terminal on Texas based service vehicle fleet

Copenhagen, Denmark – Alpine, Texas headquartered Big Bend Telephone Company has become the first commercial user of the innovative EXPLORER MSAT-G3 system for the next generation MSAT service, which combines the power of Cobham SATCOM's Push-to-Talk technology, the Ligado Networks SkyTerra 1 satellite and ViaSat's low-latency, IP-based L-band Mobile Satellite Services network. EXPLORER MSAT-G3 is the only system in its class to provide AES-256 encrypted Push-To-Talk voice and associated data over satellite.

As an innovative, new 'Comms-On-The-Move' solution, EXPLORER MSAT-G3 allows for a broad range of new, high-quality voice and data applications over a secure communications link for diverse users in the emergency services and commercial industries, including utilities and telecoms. EXPLORER MSAT-G3 extends communications coverage in the field by combining satellite links and existing cellular based networks with Land Mobile Radio (LMR). This reduces terrestrial infrastructure costs by removing the need to build and maintain radio repeater sites, while introducing significantly improved communications availability in any environment, when on the move. It is designed to cost-effectively expand and augment existing LMR Systems.

Florida-based Cobham SATCOM partner Global Data Specialists (GDS) has played an important role in the launch of the EXPLORER MSAT-G3 to users in the utilities sector, with Big Bend Telephone Company leading the way as the first commercial user. The company is using MSAT-G3 to optimize logistics and safety in the field by providing its engineers with high availability communications in areas with no cell coverage. The voice service is a fixed monthly cost per terminal, giving Big Bend complete financial control, regardless of the communications channel used at any time. In addition, GDS offers a purchase program of the hardware with service and warranty included for up to 10 years.

Following a four day onsite training course conducted by GDS and Cobham Sales Engineer Brent Short, Big Bend has completed the self-installation of EXPLORER MSAT-G3 in 29 service vehicles, which cover approximately 30,000 square miles. The service is live, with feedback from users in the field reporting high availability of dispatch communication. In addition, there is improved safety in remote areas, with the EXPLORER MSAT-G3 emergency features and a GDS added wireless clip-on microphone system, enabling engineers to communicate up to 1,000 ft. away from their vehicle.

Cobham and GDS have also provided three EXPLORER MSAT-G3 mobile units for ad-hoc use by Big Bend staff and contractors. Two MSAT-G3 units are being used indoors at dispatch locations. As the MSAT-G3 system is IP-based, GDS connected two units to the customer's LAN, allowing for communication with vehicles in the field without the requirement for satellite connectivity at the office location.

"EXPLORER MSAT-G3 is the perfect solution for utility companies looking for greater communication coverage for personnel in the field," said Bob Hershberger, Engineer, Global Data Specialists. "With EXPLORER MSAT-G3 installed and operational within a month of GDS receiving the order, Big Bend is now even better prepared to react and address infrastructure issues and service outages. Ultimately, by optimizing and increasing the availability and functionality of communications for their service vehicles, Big Bend can continue to provide high level customer service to its residential and business communication users."

EXPLORER MSAT-G3 looks and feels just like a standard LMR system, utilizing a rugged Push-To-Talk (PTT) Control Speaker Microphone. It can use an extremely powerful magnet system (optional) for securely mounting the electronically steered antenna to a vehicle's roof, with installation taking less than three hours. Uniquely, up to two USB cellular modems (optional) can be connected to the PTT terminal to enable two independent cellular network connections. In action, EXPLORER MSAT-G3's sophisticated routing functionality automatically switches between the available networks, dynamically selecting the most suitable based on quality and availability at any time. This all happens seamlessly without user intervention.

About Cobham SATCOM

Providing dependable communications and internet access anywhere under the most demanding conditions.

Our satellite and radio communication terminals perform in the most challenging and remote environments on land, at sea and in the air.

We design and manufacture these high performance products under the AVIATOR, EXPLORER, SAILOR and Sea Tel brands providing customers with outstanding performance, value and support through our global sales and service network.

About Cobham

The most important thing we build is trust.

Cobham is a leading global technology and services innovator, respected for providing solutions to the most challenging problems, from deep space to the depths of the ocean.

We employ around 11,000 people on five continents, and have customers and partners in over 100 countries, with market leading positions in: wireless, audio, video and data communications, including satellite communications; defence electronics; air-to-air refuelling; aviation services; life support and mission equipment.

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