Ball Aerospace Celebrates 21 Years of Ozone Research

PRNewswire-FirstCall
BOULDER, Colo.

Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. recently celebrated the retirement of one of the longest-running spacecraft missions to date. The Earth Radiation Budget Satellite (ERBS) was launched in 1984 on the Space Shuttle Challenger as the first spacecraft specifically designed to be launched by the Shuttle. Ball Aerospace was responsible for the spacecraft bus and the Stratospheric Aerosol Gas Experiment (SAGE II), one of the three instruments onboard. In 1984, the ERBS was expected to have a two-year design life, but the mission continued to return useful scientific data about the Earth's ozone layer for more than two decades.

"ERBS delivered tremendous scientific value over its lifespan," says David L. Taylor, president and chief executive officer of Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. "Its return on investment, calculating length of service and technical achievement combined, must be enormous. The ERBS spacecraft raised the bar for on-orbit performance."

The ERBS was part of NASA's three-satellite Earth Radiation Budget Experiment (ERBE), designed to investigate how energy from the sun is absorbed and re-emitted by the Earth. This process of absorption and re-radiation is one of the principal drivers of the Earth's weather patterns. Observations from the ERBS were also used to determine the effects of human activities (such as burning fossil fuels and the use of CFCs) and natural occurrences (such as volcanic eruptions) on the Earth's radiation balance.

Although the ERBS continued to return data from the SAGE II and ERBE instruments, newer spacecraft missions are producing improved data, making the funding for the mission unjustifiable. SAGE II and the Earth Radiation Budget Experiment instruments onboard the ERBS were turned off on Sept. 8. The ERBS was officially retired Oct. 14 after all remaining fuel was vented. The spacecraft is expected to drift in space until it disintegrates as it re-enters the Earth's atmosphere in approximately 18 years.

The ozone studies for which the ERBS provided data helped to motivate an international community to develop the Montreal Protocol Agreement, resulting in the virtual elimination of CFCs. These chemicals were found harmful to the ozone based, in part, on the wealth of data the ERBS returned on the chemistry and motions of the Earth's upper troposphere and stratosphere. As a result, new ozone-friendly technologies were developed for air conditioning, refrigeration and industrial uses.

Ball Corporation is a supplier of metal and plastic packaging products, primarily for the beverage and food industries. The company also owns Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp., which develops sensors, spacecraft, systems and components for government and commercial markets. Ball Corporation employs more than 13,500 people and reported 2004 sales of $5.4 billion.

Forward-Looking Statements

The information in this news release contains "forward-looking" statements and other statements concerning future events and financial performance. Words such as "expects," "anticipates," "estimates," and variations of same and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties which could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied. The company undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Key risks and uncertainties are summarized in the company's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, especially in Exhibit 99.2 in the most recent Form 10-K. These filings are available at our Web site and at www.sec.gov. Factors that might affect our packaging segments include fluctuation in consumer and customer demand; availability and cost of raw materials, including due to the effects of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as well as recent significant increases in resin, steel, aluminum and energy costs, and the ability to pass such increases on to customers; competitive packaging availability, pricing and substitution; changes in climate and weather; fruit, vegetable and fishing yields; industry productive capacity and competitive activity; failure to achieve anticipated productivity improvements or production cost reductions, including those associated with our beverage can end project; the German mandatory deposit or other restrictive packaging laws; changes in major customer or supplier contracts or loss of a major customer or supplier; international business risks, including foreign exchange rates, tax rates and activities of foreign subsidiaries; and the effect of LIFO accounting on earnings. Factors that might affect aerospace segment include: funding, authorization and availability of government contracts and the nature and continuation of those contracts; and technical uncertainty associated with segment contracts. Factors that could affect the company as a whole include those listed plus: acquisitions, joint ventures or divestitures; regulatory action or laws including tax, environmental and workplace safety; governmental investigations; goodwill impairment; antitrust and other litigation; strikes; boycotts; labor cost changes; rates of return projected and earned on assets of the company's defined benefit retirement plans; reduced cash flow; interest rates affecting our debt; and changes to unaudited results due to statutory audits or management's evaluation of the company's internal control over financial reporting.

SOURCE: Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp.

CONTACT: Media, Emilia Reed of Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp.,
+1-303-533-6059, ereed@ball.com

Web site: http://www.ballaerospace.com/

---

https://ball.mediaroom.com/2005-10-20-Ball-Aerospace-Celebrates-21-Years-of-Ozone-Research