

Canada-wide DGPS Service to be Decommissioned

Canada-wide DGPS Service (CDGPS) is to be decommissioned by 31st March 2011. CDGPS, the free GNSS augmentation initiated as a public service by the Canadian Council on Geomatics (CCOG), has been broadcasting continuously since October, 2003, with a North American footprint that extends from Mexico to 15° north of the Arctic Circle.

The CDGPS L-band broadcast has been carried by SkyTerra Communications Inc.'s MSAT communications satellites, which are expected to be replaced this year by the next-generation SkyTerra satellites. Significant new investment in infrastructural changes would be required to migrate to a new communication satellite. Given that several alternatives to CDGPS are now available, including commercial correction services, the requirement for a government-provided free service has been reduced, prompting the decision to cease operation of CDGPS beyond 31st March 2011.

According to SkyTerra's 10-K filing on February 25, 2010, their projected launch window is from August through October 2010. Following an in-orbit test and verification period, the MSAT traffic will be transitioned to the new SkyTerra satellites. It is possible that CDGPS' L-band services on MSAT may remain operational well into next year. However, CDGPS customers will receive 60 days notice if MSAT services transition to the new satellite network before 31st March 2011.

CDGPS has been broadcasting Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan's) real-time GPS correction stream known as GPS-C, generated from NRCan's Real-Time Canadian Active Control System. It is important to note that NRCan remains committed to the generation and improvement of its GPS-C correction beyond 31st March 2011.

NRCan has solicited and is negotiating non-exclusive arrangements with commercial operators to broadcast/multicast GPS-C, possibly filling the void left by the decommissioning of CDGPS. For more information about NRCan and its progress in commercializing GPS-C, contact NRCan at information@geod.nrcan.gc.ca