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News Digest

Date	Heading
23/04/08	NSSL helps eco-boat attempt

NSSL, the international satellite communications service provider, is supporting the world's fastest eco-boat in its attempt to smash the round the world speed record. The current record holder is the British boat 'Cable and Wireless Adventurer' which took the title in 1998 with a record time of 75 days. Earthrace is due to depart Sagunto, near Valencia in Spain, on Sunday April 27th.

With an endeavour of this type, reliable communications are absolutely critical. Dependable communications equipment is needed to enable the crew to keep in contact with supporters, sponsors and family members, but more importantly, stay in contact with HQ and other port authorities in the event they need emergency help. Robust communications are essential given that Earthrace will be crossing the remotest oceans of the world where terrestrial communications do not exist. Even visiting ports may only offer poor terrestrial communications, so it is important the boat has an independent capacity to communicate.

NSSL is the international satellite company providing the equipment which includes a Broadband Global Area Network (BGAN) unit and Iridium handheld phone. BGAN is the most advanced communication system commercially available, delivering simultaneous voice and data services (ie: internet and SMS) through a small box like device about half the size of a typical laptop. The unit is hooked into the laptop and can be up and running in minutes.

The BGAN will be used by the support team which is travelling in advance of Earthrace to the various ports it will dock at. The Earthrace crew will use these docking opportunities to upload pictures and videos to their blogs and conduct live video chats with family members and the press. The Iridium handheld phone will be kept on board at all times and enable the crew to be kept up to date with the weather and call in emergency support should they need it.

According to Danielle Edwards, Product Marketing Manager at NSSL: "This is a superb way to showcase how flexible and effective satellite communications can now be. The combined communications solutions we have provided will allow the Earthrace crew to remain reliably in touch wherever they are in the world, regardless of location or conditions. Additionally, we at NSSL feel that it has never been more important to promote the benefits of alternative fuels and we hope this adventure will continue to prove their viability. Ultimately, we are delighted to be backing another British attempt to break a world record!"

Earthrace is the most technologically innovative and eco-friendly speedboat to ever attempt the world record. The boat uses two 540hp low-emission engines and is fuelled entirely on biodiesel, which means it has a net zero carbon footprint. The boat itself is a wave piercing trimaran, designed to cut through waves rather than sail over them. She is capable of submerging up to seven metres. Wave piercing is a key element in achieving the record for circumnavigating the globe as it allows the boat to run continuously at high speed in both flat and rough sea conditions.