Published on *Hosted Payload* (http://www.hostedpayload.com)

Commercial Enterprises Offer Fertile Market for Hosted Payloads, Cavossa Says

By Paul Dykewicz

In the hosted payload world, the focus during the past several years has been on government customers, not on the private sector, but that situation may be changing, said David Cavossa, executive vice president and general manager of government solutions for Harris CapRock.

That lack of emphasis on commercial enterprises seems misplaced, Cavossa said. Cavossa, who has been a staunch advocate of using hosted payload dating back to his six years as executive director of the Satellite Industry Association (SIA) before he joined CapRock Government Solutions in July 2007 prior to its purchase by Harris Corporation in 2010, said that he envisions strong potential for non-government missions.

He listed a number of questions that have been asked in the past to explain why hosted payloads have taken many years to gain even a modicum of use by government agencies.

“Why should government buy a hosted payload?” Cavossa said. “What are the benefits and disadvantages? What policy changes are needed? How does government fund hosted payloads?” Long-term leases and “bulk-capacity procurements” have been the buzz words for the last 10 years as the industry has lobbied the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) to change the way that it buys satellite bandwidth and services to better adapt to how private sector companies procure satellites, Cavossa said.

“The pitch went something like this: if you buy more like a commercial entity, you will benefit from better prices, better flexibility and obtain more control and security over your solution,” Cavossa said. “The satellite operators carried this banner alone for several years, fighting the policy battles within the administration, the funding battles on the Hill and the low comfort levels among the customer and end-user community.”

However, progress has been achieved in recent years in the form of missions that have put hosted payloads into orbit or will do so in the coming months. On-orbit examples include hosted payloads such as Cisco’s Internet Routing in Space (IRIS) [1]on Intelsat’s IS-14 satellite and the Commercially Hosted Infrared Payload (CHIRP) on the SES-2 spacecraft of SES.

The Australian Defence Force’s UHF communications payload is contracted to be carried on Intelsat’s planned IS-22 bird, which is scheduled for launch in 2012. The cancellation of the U.S. Air Force’s Transformational Satellite (TSAT) program and growing doubts about the advent of new military satellite communications procurements have “converted” several satellite manufacturers to the hosted payload cause, as well, Cavossa said.

As for the future of hosted payloads, Cavossa expects them to be used increasingly going forward. “Hosted payloads are here to stay for awhile, especially as the U.S. Department of Defense needs to cut its budget,” Cavossa said. Innovative ideas such as hosted payloads could enable a company such as Harris CapRock to offer “game-changing” service performance to its customers and, in-turn, their customers, Cavossa said. “We know that we must change the way we buy, leverage our position in the marketplace, and open ourselves to the commitments, investments and resulting benefits of being a strategic partner rather than a tactical buyer, Cavossa said.

“The hosted payload conversation has been focused on the government for quite some time now and we are hopeful the satellite operators and manufacturers will start broadening their focus to include the larger commercial satellite service providers.”

Indeed, Harris CapRock is the largest buyer of commercial satellite communications bandwidth and serves government and commercial markets in more than 150 countries, Cavossa said.

During his tenure at SIA, Cavossa was the organization’s chief advocate for the commercial satellite industry and spearheaded education, outreach, regulatory and legislative strategies on a broad range of issues that included the protection, planning and acquisition of commercial satellite communications by the U.S. government. He now sits on SIA's board of director's and is a past chairman. Before joining SIA, Cavossa worked in the offices of external relations and legislative affairs at NASA headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Paul Dykewicz is a seasoned journalist who has covered the development of satellite television, satellite radio, satellite broadband and hosted payloads.
