

IP-based software release follows FleetBroadband installations

After completing a number of new FleetBroadband installations in Asia and the Americas, Stratos has introduced a new version of its communication management software package, designed specifically for use in an IP environment

Stratos has followed a number of new recent contracts for the supply of FleetBroadband systems to shipping companies in a variety of different global regions with the announcement of the commercial availability of the latest generations of its AmosConnect solutions, AmosConnect 8 and the AmosConnect Crew CommCenter.

The new FleetBroadband deals have been agreed with companies in South America, in Singapore, and in Thailand where the Great Circle Shipping Agency has successfully deployed FleetBroadband services on 18 commercial vessels.

Great Circle, which provides technical management services for all of the vessels owned by its parent company Precious Shipping PCL, has also agreed to deploy FleetBroadband on three further vessels by the end of the summer. All 21 of the vessels operate worldwide.

The FleetBroadband service will be used to run onboard applications such as remote management, which allows headquarters' personnel to manage the ship's computers without visiting the vessel, as well as database synchronisation and access to the onboard voyage data recorder.

In the future, Stratos says that Great Circle may also potentially utilise the system for engine-performance analysis and emissions monitoring, to help reduce fuel costs and comply with emissions regulations.

"FleetBroadband provides us with excellent performance for a wide range of shore-to-ship and ship-to-shore communications, at affordable data rates," said Great Circle technical director Jaipal Mansukhani.

"Our crewmembers also find the charges for private e-mail to be very reasonable, which has helped maintain high crew morale. The combination of strong service performance and Stratos' diligent customer support convinced us to deploy FleetBroadband and the AmosConnect messaging solution on our remaining vessels."

In Singapore, an integrated crew communications solution running over the FleetBroadband 150 has been implemented for SE Ship Management (SESM), a subsidiary of SE Shipping Lines (SESL).

The FB150, with related applications, has been installed on the SESL vessels SE Pelagica and SE Potentia. Both ships are heavy-lift, multipurpose dry cargo vessels that operate worldwide, and had previously been installed with legacy Inmarsat systems.

The new set-up will offer crew calling, private e-mail and SMS at flat global rates, with separate accounts for each crewmember.

SESM says that it additionally intends to deploy the AmosConnect Anti-Virus application to work with the onboard communications in the near future.

"It is gratifying to continue our established relationship with SESM by provid-



The latest versions of Stratos' AmosConnect software will include new options for crew communications

ing them with communications cost savings via a uniform system that can be deployed across the entire SESL fleet," said Jim Parm, Stratos CEO and president.

In addition to these new installations, Inmarsat and TESACOM, together with Stratos, have announced an order of more than 30 FleetBroadband 250 terminals for use on vessels in Argentina, Paraguay, Chile and Brazil, the largest order of FB250 terminals in South America to date.

Of the 30 terminals, 25 are to be used for the inland waterway markets in Argentina and Paraguay, and the rest for the inland waterway markets in Brazil and the fishing market in Chile.

This new order follows on from TESACOM's recent promotion to Inmarsat Silver Partner status, under the satellite operator's accreditation scheme.

"We're proud to be able to celebrate TESACOM's tenth anniversary by receiving this distinction from Inmarsat," said José Sánchez Elía, CEO of TESACOM.

"It is important to us to be able to highlight our experts' solid knowledge base and the infrastructure which allows us to provide the attention that our clients demand."

Software for IP connections

All of these new FleetBroadband customers will be eligible to take advantage of Stratos' recent announcement of commercial availability of the latest generations of its AmosConnect solutions.

AmosConnect 8 aims to enhance the usage of broadband IP-based maritime satellite services such as FleetBroadband, but can similarly be used with Iridium OpenPort and VSAT.

Stratos says that integration of the application with the broadband services installed by the shipping companies

enables the users to better control their sessions and ensure optimal airtime use directly from within the software system.

StratosNet Accelerator is included in version 8, with extended remote configuration, cost allocation and message filtering. Existing features for e-mail messaging, automatic file transfer and data synchronisation have also been enhanced, with all transfers automatically compressed and cached.

All ship-relevant data is displayed in one central information page. For example, the sending of reports and the receipt of weather updates and company news is done within the same interface, so all information is accessible in the same place.

All service settings are remotely configurable from a central office.

Stratos says that the 200,000 officers and crewmembers using nearly 20,000 AmosConnect licences should be easily able to upgrade to the new version of the application following this launch.

The new AmosConnect Crew system is a communication solution for crewmem-

bers, combining AmosConnect and Stratos ChatCard to allow those onboard to manage voice calls, e-mail and SMS.

The system provides a separate account for each crewmember, and has expanded functionality to include what Stratos describes as 'true onboard internet café' features, such as prepaid web browsing, prepaid chatting and access to global and local news services.

"This new version enables ship managers to derive maximum value from their FleetBroadband and OpenPort broadband terminals," said Jim Parm, Stratos CEO.

"It also allows seafarers to communicate onboard in the same manner as they do ashore. It fully meets crew preferences for robust, integrated communications, as well as management preferences for simplified administration and cost control."

AmosConnect Crew also incorporates new cost-reduction and security features to enable ship managers to control the volume of internet usage, control the size of messages, and minimise risks to onboard systems.

DS

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Toll Free (North America):
1 800 563 2255
Worldwide: +1 709 748 4226
info@stratosglobal.com

stratosglobal.com