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Photo Release -- Iridium Unveils World's Smallest Two-Way Satellite Data Transceiver

Smaller, Lighter, Global M2M Device Extends Even Further the Ways People and Assets Can Connect Everywhere

NEW ORLEANS, May 8, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Iridium Communications Inc. (Nasdaq:IRDM), today unveiled the world's smallest, commercial, two-way satellite data transceiver — the Iridium® 9603. Announced at International CTIA Wireless 2012, the Iridium 9603 is a data module designed for embedding into machine-to-machine (M2M) solutions for remote asset tracking, monitoring and alarming in defense, government, enterprise and consumer markets where existing larger transceivers could not fit.

A photo accompanying this release is available at <http://www.globenewswire.com/newsroom/prs/?pkgid=12767>

"With the 9603, Iridium is disrupting the global M2M market by becoming relevant to new customer segments such as personnel tracking for consumers and governments as well as fleet, vehicle and heavy equipment tracking and monitoring," said Joel Thompson, vice president, product management, Iridium. "Through this product evolution, Iridium continues to drive forward its Iridium ForceSM strategy of facilitating personal portable communications through our innovative approaches to reduce the size of our data and voice/data modules. The 9603 opens up a whole new set of ways for people and assets to make vital, two-way connections reliably, in near real-time. This device, which is smaller than a matchbook, further enables Iridium's vital communications service with the same rich feature set in a terrific value proposition. And of course, Iridium is the only telecommunications carrier in the world that can offer 100 percent pole-to-pole coverage through its meshed network of 66 Low Earth Orbiting (LEO) satellites."

The Iridium 9603 is 70 percent smaller by volume, and half the board footprint of the Iridium 9602. The Iridium 9603 breaks down design barriers and enables Iridium's 275 partners to embed global connectivity in hand-held personal tracking devices and even smaller vehicles, containers, devices for field monitoring, command and control applications, and unattended sensors.

"With the terrestrial M2M market now growing faster than ever, Iridium and its partners are dramatically increasing the prospects for satellite M2M along a similar path with this new development," said Robin Duke-Woolley, chief executive officer of Beecham Research. "The major reduction in size of the 9603 transceiver will encourage smaller end user devices with embedded satellite connectivity. This type of technology innovation moves satellite M2M into application areas traditionally considered to be the preserve of terrestrial wireless and will further accelerate Iridium's fast growth in the Mobile Satellite Services market."

In its recent first-quarter earnings release for 2012, Iridium announced its sixth consecutive quarter of approximately 50 percent M2M subscriber growth. The company now draws nearly one-fifth of commercial service revenue from this fast-growing market segment and reported a 29 percent year-over-year increase in M2M unit sales volumes.

The Iridium 9603 is a single board transceiver that offers low latency and duplex data connectivity, permitting reliable two-way communications to and from remote devices. This not only allows users to reliably transfer location and status information, but also to remotely adjust device parameters such as reporting intervals. For example, two-way data communications enables first responders to stay in constant touch during emergency situations with personal location and tracking devices that support two way messages as well as tracking and location updates.

The Iridium 9603 complements the Iridium 9602 in a portfolio of available Short Burst Data (SBD) devices, offering development partners multiple hardware options for enabling customer solutions via the Iridium global network. This board-mounted "black box" provides the device interface through a single multi-pin interface connector and an antenna connector.

Five long-standing Iridium partners served as beta partners in the early testing and integration of the Iridium 9603. These companies are actively incorporating the device into their products, some of which are scheduled to launch as early as June 2012.

Blackbird Technologies, Inc., a leader in the development, production, training and field use of tracking technologies, produces

a number of Iridium-based products, including portable personnel tracking and messaging devices, embeddable tracking units, and a handheld situational awareness system that permits mobile field monitoring of other linked devices. Blackbird is in late-stage development of three new field products that will leverage the size reduction of the Iridium 9603.

"We have had a close and successful partnership with Iridium since 2006, in part because we share a common commitment to constantly delivering the most innovative solutions to meet critical customer missions," said Scott Hopkins, vice president for Technology Development at Blackbird. "Our team has been working with Iridium 9603 prototypes due to the tremendous value we see for our end-use customers. We're also exploring the benefits of incorporating the Iridium 9603 into our established legacy and flagship products, as well as next-generation systems under consideration."

ITT Exelis, a diversified, top-tier global aerospace, defense, and information solutions company with strong positions in enduring and emerging global markets, manufactures and delivers Iridium-based tactical satellite communication and remote tracking systems for U.S. forces around the world. The Iridium 9603 will enable Exelis to further streamline its devices to enhance overall utility. By participating in the early adopter program, Exelis has developed four products containing the Iridium 9603, none of which would have been possible without the new, compact size of the SBD modem.

NAL Research Corporation, a long-standing Iridium partner, produces Iridium-based handheld devices, air-deployed unattended sensors and hand-emplaced remote sensors for the defense, research and commercial sectors. These products are used globally in a wide range of applications including asset tracking, search and rescue, remote sensing and command/control of both ground and airborne platforms. NAL Research will be the first Iridium partner to implement the 9603 chipset into a family of expandable micro-sensors, designed to fit inside a puck less than 1.9" in diameter that can be dropped from altitudes of 10,000 feet by tactical aircraft. This integrated device will provide joint forces with measurement and signature intelligence-derived information on designated targets.

The Iridium Communications Inc. logo is available at <http://www.globenewswire.com/newsroom/prs/?pkgid=10426>

About Iridium Communications Inc.

Iridium is the only mobile voice and data satellite communications network that spans the entire globe. Iridium enables connections between people, organizations and assets to and from anywhere, in real time. Together with its ever-expanding ecosystem of partner companies, Iridium delivers an innovative and rich portfolio of reliable solutions for markets that require truly global communications. The company has a major development program underway for its next-generation network — Iridium NEXT. Iridium Communications Inc. is headquartered in McLean, Va., U.S.A., and its common stock trades on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the ticker symbol IRDM. For more information about Iridium products, services and partner solutions, visit www.iridium.com.

Forward-Looking Statements

Statements in this press release that are not purely historical facts may constitute forward-looking statements as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Forward-looking statements include statements regarding the development of Iridium NEXT and the development and marketing of applications based on the Iridium 9603. Other forward-looking statements can be identified by the words "anticipates," "may," "can," "believes," "expects," "projects," "intends," "likely," "will," "to be" and other expressions that are predictions or indicate future events, trends or prospects. These forward-looking statements involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors that may cause the actual results, performance or achievements of Iridium to differ materially from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. These risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, uncertainties regarding customer demand for Iridium's products and services, Iridium's ability to maintain the health, capacity and content of its satellite constellation, and the development of and transition to Iridium NEXT, as well as general industry and economic conditions, and competitive, legal, governmental and technological factors. Other factors that could cause actual results to differ materially from those indicated by the forward-looking statements include those factors listed under the caption "Risk Factors" in the Company's Form 10-K for the period ended December 31, 2011, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on March 6, 2012. There is no assurance that Iridium's expectations will be realized. If one or more of these risks or uncertainties materialize, or if Iridium's underlying assumptions prove incorrect, actual results may vary materially from those expected, estimated or projected. Iridium's forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this press release, and Iridium undertakes no obligation to update forward-looking statements.

CONTACT: Ashley Eames

Iridium Communications Inc.

+1 (703) 287-7476

ashley.eames@iridium.com

Diana Swanson

FTI Consulting

+1 (312) 553-6703

diana.swanson@fticonsulting.com

Iridium announces the world's smallest two-way satellite data transceiver, the Iridium 9603, extending the ways that people and assets can connect everywhere.