

Support 2019 Satellite Launch of Argos Instruments: *Avoid Potential Data Gaps!*

The existing constellation of NOAA polar orbiting satellites that currently supports Argos instruments is aging and operating past its design lifetime. Although no data exist to indicate these satellites are failing, operational lifetimes of other similar satellites suggest that they are ready for an update. However, if NOAA is unable to deliver a new space-based Argos module by 2019, there will be a possible gap in service which could cause data loss for Argos-based projects. NOAA received funding in the President's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget to support a new satellite launch in 2020, delaying an earlier goal for a 2019 launch. The solution: NOAA advances their proposed timeline for the launch forward by one year with the goal of a hosted payload launch of Argos instruments in 2019.

At the end of April 2016, a group of representatives from CLS America, US Argos users, and PTT manufacturers convened in Washington, D.C. The purpose was to meet with Congressional leaders and convey a unified message — please support an acceleration in funding so that a new Argos module can be launched into orbit in 2019. Lance and Paul represented MTI, meeting with the staff from 10 Congressional offices to help explain the unique properties that define the Argos constellation (low-power devices, global coverage, etc.) and the urgency for continued satellite coverage. Argos users from the US are encouraged to reiterate the message. Please see the CLS America website for more information on how you can help.



Paul and Lance feeling awkward in their suits in front of the U.S. Capitol Building, looking equally odd as it undergoes restoration.

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MTI Employee Spotlight

We have decided to feature one of our employees in each of our future issues, so you can meet the team behind the transmitters. This issue, we are introducing you to:

Joe Downey – Assembly Technician

Q: Tell us a little about yourself.

A: I'm originally from nearby Silver Spring, Maryland. After high school, I joined the Navy and spent several years on a base in San Diego. The Navy trained and employed me as a helicopter repair man. It was there that I learned about (and learned that I had a love for) electronics repair and circuitry. I joined MTI as a technician in 2010.

Q: What do you do here at MTI?

A: I'm lucky to be able to do many tasks at MTI that I enjoy. Most of my time is spent assembling transmitter housings, soldering and assembling parts, and building circuitry on the pick-and-place machine that I operate.

Q: What is your favorite part about your job?

A: Overall, I like the challenge that working at MTI presents. Every day has a lot of variety and keeps me very busy. I feel proud when I see the finished product that we worked as a team to put together. My favorite task is definitely operating the pick-and-place machine. I like seeing the miniature parts (that are useless by themselves) be precisely placed on circuit boards to make this highly complex product.

Q: Do you have a favorite memory or story from your time here at MTI?

A: Definitely my interview. I arrived for my job interview, which was supposed to last "roughly an hour," in a very uncomfortable, itchy suit. Immediately, when I walked in, Paul jokingly told me that I was overdressed, adding to my nervousness and sweating. During my interview, Lance told me, "they were very busy, and would I like to try out working with him on some real transmitters?" I quickly agreed and ended up staying almost the entire day. I haven't left since! Well, I've gone home and stuff, but you know what I mean—I've worked here ever since!

My second favorite memory has to be when I tricked our high school intern into thinking that everyone at MTI dressed up elaborately for Halloween. He arrived on Halloween day dressed in a real firefighter suit and had to work the entire day in a very heavy and hot suit. Not quite the correct attire to assemble small machinery!

