

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** **CONTACT:** Laurie Goldberg 310.975.1631 April 29, 2012 laurie\_goldberg@discovery.com

**DISCOVERY CHANNEL CRASHES A PASSENGER JET FOR SCIENCE DOCUMENTARY**

(Silver Spring, Md.) A Boeing 727 passenger jet has been deliberately crash-landed in a remote and uninhabited Mexican desert as part of a scientific experiment for an unprecedented international television documentary for Discovery Channel, Channel 4 in the UK, plus Pro Sieben in Germany. The pilot parachuted out of the 170-seat aircraft just minutes before the collision after setting it on a crash course, it was then flown remotely from a chase plane. The crash went according to plan and there were no injuries or damage to property.

Rather than carrying passengers, the plane was packed with scientific experiments, including crash test dummies. Dozens of cameras recorded the crash from inside the aircraft, on the ground, in chase planes and even on the ejecting pilot's helmet. The program is being made by award-winning British production company Dragonfly Film and Television Productions.

The project aims to recreate a serious, but survivable, passenger jet crash landing with a real aircraft in order to allow an international team of experts to study the crashworthiness of the aircraft's airframe and cabin as well as the impact of crashes on the human body, plus possible means of increasing passenger survivability and evaluating new 'black box' crash-recording technology.

The plane was crashed in a remote and unpopulated part of the Sonoran Desert of Baja California, Mexico. The location was chosen after an extensive international search to find a suitable location offering the perfect conditions for this groundbreaking scientific project.

For safety reasons, an exclusion zone at the crash site was manned by security teams, as well as the Mexican military and police. Ahead of the crash, a full safety review of the project was undertaken by the highly-qualified pilots and commanders as well as the Mexican authorities who concluded that it was safe for all concerned.

Following the crash, the aircraft will be salvaged and an extensive environmental clean-up operation is being carried out by a reputable agency with the full co-operation of the Mexican authorities.

"This ground breaking project features an actual crash of a passenger jet and explores the big questions about how to make plane crashes more survivable; it's the ideal premiere episode for our **CURIOSITY** series that stirs the imagination of our audience, bravely asking questions and fearlessly seeking answers. This latest production captures that audaciousness perfectly and I can't wait to share it," said Eileen O'Neill, Group President of Discovery and TLC Networks.

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Discovery Channel/ Curiosity Plane Crash – Page 2

"For the first time, leading scientists and veteran crash investigators, who have been enthusiastic supporters of this project, witness a plane crash in real time and explore what happens to the airframe and cabin, as well as the effects on the human body during a catastrophe of this magnitude. We hope to provide new information about how to improve the chances of survival while providing scientific results on passenger safety and new technologies, including new 'black box' flight data recording systems."

Executive Producer, Sanjay Singhal, from Dragonfly Film and Television Productions, said: "NASA were the last people to attempt a crash test of a full passenger jet three decades ago. Now, with the improvements in filming and remote control technology we felt that the time was right to do it again. It's never been safer to fly, but we want to use this as an opportunity to provide scientific data that might help to improve passenger safety in those extremely rare cases when a catastrophic aircraft accident does occur.”

"This has been an extraordinary feat of organization, involving up to 300 people on location, including the production team, pilots, experts, risk management, plus local crew, military, fire teams and police. This is the culmination of four years of planning and hard work. We're particularly grateful to the Mexican authorities for their assistance and support," Singhal added.

The crash and the results of the accompanying research will be shown later this year in a feature-length documentary on Discovery Channel in the United States, Channel 4 in the UK plus Pro Sieben in Germany. The program is made by award-winning production company Dragonfly Film and Television Productions.

**About Discovery Channel**

Discovery Channel is dedicated to creating the highest quality non-fiction content that informs and entertains its consumers about the world in all its wonder, diversity and amazement. The network, which is distributed to 100.8 million U.S. homes, can be seen in 210 countries and territories, offering a signature mix of compelling, high-end production values and vivid cinematography across genres including, science and technology, exploration, adventure, history and in-depth, behind-the-scenes glimpses at the people, places and organizations that shape and share our world. For more information, please visit www.discovery.com.

**About Discovery Communications**

Discovery Communications (Nasdaq: DISCA, DISCB, DISCK) is the world's #1 nonfiction media company reaching more than 1.5 billion cumulative subscribers in 210 countries and territories. Discovery is dedicated to satisfying curiosity through 130-plus worldwide television networks, led by Discovery Channel, TLC, Animal Planet, Science and Investigation Discovery, as well as US joint venture networks OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network, The Hub and 3net, the first 24-hour 3D network. Discovery also is a leading provider of educational products and services to schools and owns and operates a diversified portfolio of digital media services, including HowStuffWorks.com. For more information, please visit www.discoverycommunications.com.

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