



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## AVCO WINS \$26 MILLION PROGRAM

Wilmington, Mass. (December 9) -- The U. S. Air Force's Space and Missile Systems Organization (SAMSO) of Los Angeles, California has announced that the Avco Systems Division, Wilmington, Massachusetts has competitively won a \$26 million, 33-month Research and Development contract for an advanced reentry vehicle program.

The program represents 300 - 400 jobs in the Greater Boston area. In the event that the program proceeds into production, another 1500 - 2000 jobs could result over the next six to ten years.

Designated ABRV (Advanced Ballistic Reentry Vehicle), the program's goal is to design, develop and test new concepts for reentry vehicles leading to the fabrication and flight test of four reentry vehicles under actual ICBM conditions.

Avco Systems Division has been active in reentry technology for over twenty years, providing the Air Force with systems engineering and design, flight testing and advanced material development. The Air Force conducts an on-going program to develop strategic options for the future to reduce engineering and production lead time in the development of new strategic weapon systems.

September 30, 1976

Within the Department of Defense's authorized and appropriated budget are funds for modernizing the land-based ICBM force. In particular, the Advanced Ballistic Reentry Systems (ABRES) program administered by the Space and Missile Systems Organization (SAMSO) for the Air Force is charged with the research and development of an Advanced Ballistic Reentry Vehicle (ABRV) for possible use on the MX mobile-based missile system. Avco Systems Division in Wilmington, Massachusetts, and General Electric Space and Missile Systems Division in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, are currently competing for this program. Proposals have been submitted to SAMSO and notification of award is expected by November 18, 1976.

There is a long term implication of 4,000 jobs for the Boston area if ABRV and future ICBM force modernization programs such as Minuteman II Update are awarded to Avco. This would put Avco back into the missile production business and provide a production labor force of about 3,000 and technical labor force of 1,000 people for a six to ten year period.

Avco feels it is technically qualified to perform this work and welcomes the competition with General Electric. Just four weeks ago, however, General Electric lost a similar competition for a 50 million dollar ABRES sponsored Advanced Maneuvering Reentry Vehicle System in competition with McDonnell Douglas in California. Although General Electric still retains a significant share of the missile production business, it is possible that their recent loss to the California firm might prompt an aggressive lobbying effort by General Electric for the ABRV award that Avco hopes to win.

Avco is seeking only a fair technical competition. They have asked us to be alert for any undue pressure from General Electric lobbyists which might mitigate such a fair competition.