

Lockheed Martin Marks Major Milestone At West Coast Atlas V Launch Pad

Vandenberg Air Force Base Pad Is on Schedule for 2005 Atlas V Debut Launch

PRNewswire-FirstCall

DENVER

Lockheed Martin marked a major milestone in its drive to complete the West Coast Atlas V launch facility with the arrival early this morning of the fourth and final fixed launch platform (FLP) segment at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. The entire 250-ton FLP structure was shipped over-the-road in four separate sections on a 3,500-mile journey from the Sauer, Inc. fabrication facility in Oak Hill, Fla., to Space Launch Complex 3 East (SLC-3E) overlooking California's central coast.

"Delivery of the fixed launch platform puts us well on our way to pad completion by the end of the year, and it brings us another step closer to the first Atlas V launch from the West Coast, which is vital in providing assured access to space for our Air Force customers," said James V. Spornick, Atlas program vice president. "It also marks the successful completion of a complex, one-of-a-kind transportation effort. As long as a football field, the largest FLP transport rig is thought to be the biggest over-the-road shipment ever attempted cross-country."

The fixed launch platform supports the 19-story Atlas V launch vehicle during its integration on the pad, during fueling and final preparation for launch, and during the liftoff of the vehicle. Now that all four FLP segments are at the launch pad construction site, construction crews will assemble the entire launch platform structure before positioning it on top of the launch exhaust duct. The first Atlas V booster is on schedule to be erected on SLC-3E by the end of 2004. Integrated ground and launch vehicle system testing is scheduled to begin early in 2005 leading to the inaugural VAFB launch later in the year.

Planning for the unprecedented transport began last January and ultimately involved extensive coordination with eight states along the southern U.S. route. The FLP was shipped in four separate segments: two smaller loads on conventional tractor-trailers rigs, the third segment on a 14-axle, 165-foot-long rig, and the fourth and largest on a separately steerable, 29-axle rig propelled by a high-power diesel tractor and a pusher

tractor. To meet the regulations of all states traversed, the weight of the largest 90-ton segment had to be distributed over 29 axles by huge connecting structures called "Schnabels," making the total transport over 300 feet long.

Only six months after SLC-3E groundbreaking last January, major construction activities already nearly completed include raising the mobile service tower and umbilical tower 30 feet, providing a new 60-ton bridge crane and constructing a new launch exhaust duct to accommodate the powerful Atlas V booster propulsion systems. Many other ground systems improvements are under way to accommodate the new, larger Atlas V vehicle, including phasing in new computer control systems to be compatible with existing Atlas V systems.

The FLP transport was conducted for Sauer, Inc. and Lockheed Martin by Sunbelt Cranes, Construction & Hauling, Inc., Tampa, Fla. Sauer was also a major contractor for the new Atlas V launch pad at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., which has been the site of three successful Atlas V launches to date. Hensel-Phelps, Inc., Greeley, Colo., is the program management contractor for Atlas V launch pad efforts on both coasts.

Since the Atlas commercial program began in the early 1990s, Lockheed Martin has completed eight launch pad modifications to support the Atlas family evolution without disruptions to busy launch manifests. SLC-3E at Vandenberg was last modified to accommodate the Atlas IIAS configuration, which flew three successful missions.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, headquartered near Denver, Colo., is one of the major operating units of Lockheed Martin Corporation. Space Systems Company designs, develops, tests and manufactures a variety of advanced technology systems for space and defense. Chief products include space launch systems, defense systems, interplanetary and science spacecraft, spacecraft for commercial and government customers, fleet ballistic missiles and missile defense systems.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2003 sales of more than \$31 billion.

Media Contact: Julie Andrews, 321-853-1567,

email: julie.c.andrews@lmco.com

SOURCE: Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company

Web site: <http://lmms.external.lmco.com/>

<https://news.lockheedmartin.com/2004-07-27-Lockheed-Martin-Marks-Major-Milestone-at-West-Coast-Atlas-V-Launch-Pad>