Lockheed Martin Delivers First Atlas Five Booster To West Coast Launch Site

New Launch Vehicle On Track to Support First Government Launch Later in 2005

Lockheed Martin's first Atlas V booster for launch from the West Coast has arrived at Vandenberg Air Force Base, continuing the proud legacy of over four decades of Atlas operations from California.

The booster and Centaur upper stage made separate trips from Denver, Colo. aboard an An-124-100 Russian aircraft and upon landing and offload were taken to a base facility for receiving inspection. In March, the Atlas team will transport the rocket segments to the newly refurbished Space Launch Complex 3 East for vertical stacking, followed by "pathfinding" activity leading to first launch later this year.

"This is a very exciting week for the Atlas program as we receive our first flight hardware at our West Coast launch site," said James V. Sponnick, Lockheed Martin Atlas program vice president. "Space Launch Complex 3 East will soon begin to launch many critical payloads for our government customers as we perform our mission to provide assured to space for the nation. Hats off to the construction team for the outstanding job they have done in getting the new pad ready."

Lockheed Martin and the U.S. Air Force broke ground at SLC-3E in January 2004 to begin the renovations required to prepare the launch site for Atlas V missions. In a ceremonial transfer last week, the "activations" team handed over the launch pad to the operational team, signifying that the major focus of activity on the pad now turns from construction to preparation to launch. The activations team includes many of the same engineers and contractors that built Launch Complex 41 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., which has already launched four successful Atlas V missions.

The Atlas V vehicle stands over 200 feet tall, an increase of about 50 feet over the Atlas IIAS vehicle that launched successfully three times from SLC-3E. The vehicle also incorporates a stretched Centaur upper stage. In performance, The Atlas V 400 and 500 series of launch vehicles will provide over two times the lift capability of the 100 percent successful Atlas IIAS vehicle, which concluded its perfect record with the final launch from CCAFS Aug. 31, 2004.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, headquartered in Denver, Colo., is one of the major operating units of Lockheed Martin Corporation. Space Systems designs, develops, tests, manufactures and operates of a variety of advanced technology systems for military, civil and commercial customers. Chief products include a full-range of space launch systems, ground systems, remote sensing and communications satellites for commercial and government customers, advanced space observatories and interplanetary spacecraft, fleet ballistic missiles and missile defense systems.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, 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 2004 sales of $35.5 billion.

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