

Lockheed Martin To Begin Work On Hybrid Launch Vehicle For U.S. Air Force

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Lockheed Martin has been awarded a \$2.5 million contract by the U.S. Air Force for the Hybrid Launch Vehicle (HLV) Studies and Analysis program. Part of the Operationally Responsive Space initiative, the HLV will provide the Air Force with an affordable, responsive, reliable and simple-to-operate capability for launching tactical space assets and conventional satellites into low earth orbit.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems is one of four companies awarded contracts for the program by the U.S. Air Force's Space and Missile Systems Center, Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif. Lockheed Martin will formulate conceptual designs for an operational system architecture, a subscale demonstrator and associated ground hardware and infrastructure for an HLV that employs a reusable first-stage booster and an expendable upper stage.

"Our expertise in reusable launch vehicles positions us to formulate a system design concept that will completely meet the Air Force's needs for a highly operable vehicle that also is extremely reliable," said Dave Kennon, Hybrid Launch Vehicle program manager, Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. "Under our concept, the HLV will take off vertically and the reusable first stage will return to the launch site for a horizontal landing."

Previous Air Force studies have found that the hybrid approach -- a reusable booster with expendable upper stages -- offers cost advantages over a fully expendable or fully reusable vehicle. This approach also will be highly responsive, with an anticipated 24- to 48-hour turnaround time. Air Force requirements call for an HLV that will accommodate medium to heavy lift (10,000 to 15,000 pounds).

The Lockheed Martin contract includes a base amount of \$1.2 million over a period of 14 months and an option for \$1.3 million over a period of six months. Lockheed Martin will perform HLV Studies and Analysis program management in Denver and engineering support work in Sunnyvale, Calif., New Orleans, La., and Fort Worth, Texas. Lockheed Martin's team includes subcontractors Aerojet of Sacramento, Calif., and Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne of Canoga Park, Calif., for reusable propulsion systems.

In an upcoming separate procurement, the Air Force will select two contractor teams to design subscale HLV demonstrators, with work to begin in fiscal year 2007. After preliminary design review, the Air Force will select one contractor team to develop the demonstrator HLV. The full-scale HLV is planned to be initially operational by 2018.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2005 sales of \$37.2 billion.

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