Lockheed Martin-Built NASA Stardust Selected For Aviation Week 2006 Program Excellence Award

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NASA's Stardust program has received the 2006 Aviation Week Program Excellence Award. Lockheed Martin designed and built the Stardust spacecraft under contract to NASA. The award was recently announced at the publication's Aerospace and Defense Conference in Phoenix, Ariz.

The Stardust mission, managed by the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), provided scientists with the first comet samples and interstellar dust grains ever returned to Earth from a known comet. In addition to building the Stardust spacecraft, Lockheed Martin built the sample return capsule, provided joint spacecraft operations working in concert with JPL, and designed and implemented the capsule's recovery in the Utah desert earlier this year.

"Stardust was an amazing mission; one of intrigue, innovation and determination, not to mention a couple world records," said Jim Crocker, vice president of Civil Space at Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. "This award is another testament to our remarkable program team at NASA JPL, Lockheed Martin and the University of Washington."

On Jan. 2, 2004 Stardust flew through the coma of comet Wild 2 and captured cometary dust particles. The spacecraft also collected interstellar dust during its seven-year, 3.2-billion mile voyage. Stardust's sample return capsule gently returned these samples to Earth on Jan. 15, 2006. As a result, scientists are already rewriting the text of how the solar system was formed.

"I was thrilled to represent our Stardust team for this award because it recognizes the breadth and depth of its accomplishment," said Joe Vellinga, Stardust program manager at Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. "Aviation Week's team of aerospace and defense experts culled through more than 300 programs to find those that did what they set out to do, on schedule and within cost. To win out of the entire industry is extremely flattering."

Lockheed Martin's Atlas launch vehicle program won the second of only two 2006 Aviation Week Program Excellence Awards.

The Program Excellence Award is judged by a panel of industry experts according to a comprehensive set of criteria that includes quality program management. Programs are evaluated on how they create value for the parent corporation and customers, establish organization and leadership processes, address complexity and use metrics to measure performance.

The Stardust program was also a recent recipient of the 2006 Popular Mechanics Breakthrough Award. Stardust was one of eight innovations recognized in the Science & Invention category and featured in the October 2006 issue.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, a major operating unit of Lockheed Martin Corporation, designs, develops, tests, manufactures and operates a variety of advanced-technology systems for national security, civil and commercial customers. Chief products include human space flight systems; a full range of remote sensing, navigation, meteorological and communications satellites and instruments; space observatories and interplanetary spacecraft; launch vehicles, fleet ballistic missiles; and missile defense systems.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 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.

For more information about the Stardust program go to:
http://stardust.jpl.nasa.gov/

For additional information, visit our website:
http://www.lockheedmartin.com/stardust

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