Lockheed Martin Readies For Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle At NASA's Kennedy Space Center

NASA transitions historic Operations & Checkout Building for use by Lockheed Martin and the Constellation Program

In another milestone marking steady progress on the Orion crew exploration vehicle program, the Lockheed Martin team accepted responsibility today for the Operations & Checkout (O&C) Building at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Kennedy Space Center. Lockheed Martin will use the historic facility to process Orion, America's next-generation human spacecraft.

The transition announcement was made in a ceremony held today at Kennedy Space Center's O&C Building originally used for the Apollo program. Lockheed Martin was selected by NASA last August to design and build Orion, a key element of NASA's Constellation Program that will succeed the Space Shuttle as NASA's primary vehicle for human space exploration by 2014.

Signaling the start of one the most significant spacecraft development efforts since the Space Shuttle, Orion is an advanced capsule design utilizing state-of-the-art technology that will be capable of transporting up to six crew members to and from the International Space Station and up to four crew members to the Moon and eventually to Mars. Final assembly, checkout and acceptance testing of Orion for both the Crew Module and Service Module will be performed in the O&C Building at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

"This is another significant step forward for the Orion program as we take this massive, historic building that served our nation's space program so well during the Apollo years and completely modernize it for an entirely new generation of human space exploration vehicles," said Cleon Lacefield, Vice President and Orion Program Manager, Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. "This is an exciting day for the entire team and we look forward to getting the O&C ready to support NASA's Orion missions for decades to come."

Modifications to the O&C Building will be needed to prepare it for the Orion program. Lockheed Martin will begin those modifications in April 2007 and will be completed in November 2008. Changes will include retrofitting of the existing Altitude Chamber to create a Thermal Vacuum Chamber for combined environment testing of Orion. Utilities such as power, nitrogen, housekeeping vacuum, compressed air and imagery cameras will be installed to support nine new Orion specific workstations. Included in outfitting those new workstations will be three new modular clean areas to provide a 100,000 class clean room environment, as well as creation and outfitting of a Refurbishment Area to support post-flight processing of the crew module for re-use. In addition, a dedicated Lockheed Martin Intranet (LMI) will be installed to perform secured data/information transmission.

Lockheed Martin chose the O&C Building for Orion's final assembly and integration because proximity with the launch operations will provide much greater efficiency in the flow of testing and operations leading to launch on the Ares I launch vehicle. The synergies gained by utilizing KSC for assembly and integration will provide NASA with greater operational flexibility during the final integration of Orion with Ares I.

Additionally, the State of Florida provided incentives and financial assistance valued at $45.5 million for the Orion program to cover training, transportation infrastructure, facility improvements and equipment. $35 million is going toward upgrading and modernizing the O&C facility. $10.5 million is going toward workforce development and training for a new generation of skilled employees in Florida who will continue to be engaged in NASA's next generation space program for decades to come.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company is one of the major operating units of Lockheed Martin Corporation. Space Systems designs, develops, tests, manufactures and operates a variety of advanced technology systems for military, civil and commercial customers. Chief products include a full range of space launch systems, including heavy-lift capability, 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, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and containment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2006 sales of $39.6 billion.

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