Lockheed Martin Delivers Phoenix Mars Lander Spacecraft To NASA

Next Mission to Mars Working Toward August Launch

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A NASA spacecraft touched down on the coast of Florida after a brief 3-1/2 hour trip from the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, but the spacecraft's next and final trip will be a 9-1/2 month journey to Mars.

The spacecraft, the Phoenix Mars Lander, was delivered by its builder Lockheed Martinaboard an Air Force C-17 to NASA's Kennedy Space Center, Fla. May 7. The vehicle will undergo three more months of testing and integration in preparation for its launch on a Delta II launch vehicle in early August.

Phoenix is NASA's next mission to Mars and is the first mission of NASA's Mars Scout Program. Scheduled to arrive at Mars in May 2008, the spacecraft will land on the icy northern latitudes of Mars. During its 90-day primary mission, Phoenix will dig trenches with its robotic arm into the frozen layers of water below the surface. The spacecraft will use various on-board instruments to analyze the contents of the ice and soil -- checking for the presence of organic compounds and other conditions favorable for life.

"We've worked closely with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the University of Arizona to design and build an amazing spacecraft," said Jim Crocker, vice president of Sensing and Exploration Systems at Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company in Denver. "The Phoenix mission is thrilling as it will be the first spacecraft to land in the polar regions of Mars and will also be the first to touch water."

The Phoenix spacecraft was previously known at the 2001 Mars Surveyor lander, before the mission was canceled in 2000 and the spacecraft was mothballed. In early 2006, the spacecraft started the assembly, test and launch operations (ATLO) period of the now Phoenix mission.

"It's taken a great deal of dedication and hard work to bring us to this moment," said Ed Sedivy, Phoenix program manager at Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. "I'm proud that we have been able to get a well-tested Phoenix to the launch site ahead of schedule and maintain focus on ensuring mission success for our customer."

The University of Arizona, Tucson, leads the Phoenix mission. The Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a division of the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, manages the Phoenix Mars Lander for the NASA Science Mission Directorate, Washington, D.C.

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company, a major operating unit of Lockheed Martin Corporation, designs, develops, tests, manufactures and operates a full spectrum 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; laser radar; 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 2006 sales of $39.6 billion.

Additional information about the Phoenix Mars Mission is available online at:http://phoenix.lpl.arizona.edu/ and http://www.lockheedmartin.com/phoenix

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