



A Look at NASA

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NASA Weekly Update

Week of March 4 – March 10, 2008

3-10: Endeavour and Crew Ready for Tomorrow's Launch: The rotating service structure has been rolled away from space shuttle Endeavour in a major milestone leading up to launch. The liftoff of Endeavour on the STS-123 mission remains on schedule for 2:28 a.m. EDT Tuesday, March 11. The movement of the



The rotating service structure is rolled back from around space shuttle Endeavour Monday morning.

enclosed gantry clears the way for the loading of about 500,000 gallons of supercold liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen propellants into the orange external tank this evening. STS-123 is an international mission combining the expertise and experience of several countries working together to create a working 'home' in space.

3-7: WMAP Reveals Neutrinos, End of Dark Ages, First Second of Universe: NASA released this week five years of data collected by the Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe (WMAP) that refines our understanding of the universe and its development. It is a treasure trove of information, including at least three major findings: 1) New evidence that a sea of cosmic neutrinos permeates the universe, 2) Clear evidence the first stars took more than a half-billion years to create a cosmic fog, and 3) Tight new constraints on the burst of expansion in the universe's

first trillionth of a second. For further information, see <http://wmap.gsfc.nasa.gov>. For related images to this story, please visit on the Web: http://www.nasa.gov/topics/universe/features/wmap_fiv_e.html.

3-7: NASA Awards Safety and Mission Assurance Contract at Kennedy: NASA's Kennedy Space Center has awarded Millennium Engineering and Integration Company of Satellite Beach, Fla., a safety and mission assurance support services contract. The cost-plus-award-fee contract is valued approximately \$45.2 million during a four-year performance period, which includes a two-year base period and two, one-year options. The new contract consolidates several contracted activities currently supporting Kennedy's Safety and Mission Assurance Directorate requirements into a single support contract.

3-7: NASA Awards Contract for Agency Bankcard Services: On Friday, NASA announced the selection of JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association, of Washington to provide agency bankcard services. The indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity, task order contract was awarded under GSA's Smartpay 2 and is for a three-year base period, with three, two-year option periods and one, one-year option. JPMorgan Chase will provide commercial bankcard services and new cards for purchases, travel costs, and fleet charges.

3-6: NASA Offers Ares I-X Media Opportunity at Glenn, March 13: Reporters are invited to NASA's Glenn Research Center in Cleveland on Thursday, March 13 at 11 a.m. EDT to view a full-scale element of NASA's Ares I-X rocket. The test launch and flight of the Ares I-X in April 2009 is a critical milestone in the development of NASA's Constellation Program that will send astronauts back to the moon. The simulated element represents the size, outer shape and mass of the second stage of the Ares I rocket. Media also will receive an update of NASA's Ares I-X Project and a tour of Glenn's Fabrication Shop. Media wishing to attend this event should contact Katherine Martin at

216-433-2901 by 4:30 p.m. on March 12. For more information about Ares I-X work at Glenn, visit: <http://spaceflight systems.grc.nasa.gov/LaunchSystems/Simulator>. For more information about NASA's Constellation Program, visit: <http://www.nasa.gov/constellation>.

3-6: Saturn's Moon Rhea Also May Have Rings:

NASA's Cassini spacecraft has found evidence of material orbiting Rhea, Saturn's second largest moon. This is the first time rings may have been found around a moon. A broad debris disk and at least one ring appear to have been detected by a suite of six instruments on Cassini specifically designed to study the atmospheres and particles around Saturn and its moons. Rhea is roughly 950 miles in diameter. The apparent debris disk measures several thousand miles from end to end. The particles that make up the disk and any embedded rings probably range from the size of small pebbles to boulders. An additional dust cloud may extend up to 3,000 miles from the moon's center, almost eight times the radius of Rhea. Since the discovery, Cassini scientists have carried out numerical simulations to determine if Rhea can maintain rings. The models show that Rhea's gravity field, in combination with its orbit around Saturn, could allow rings that form to remain in place for a very long time. For information on the Cassini mission, visit: <http://www.nasa.gov/cassini>.

3-5: NASA's Johnson Allows Phone Participation in Mission News Briefings:

During space shuttle Endeavour's STS-123 mission, NASA's Johnson Space Center will operate a phone bridge for media briefings that occur outside of the normal business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CDT Monday through Friday. The new system will allow media not present at Johnson to ask questions by phone during the mission status briefings. To be eligible to use this service, reporters must possess a valid media credential issued by a NASA center or for the STS-123 shuttle mission. Media planning to use the service must contact the Johnson newsroom at 281-483-5111 no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of a briefing in which they wish to participate. Newsroom personnel will verify their credentials and transfer them to the phone bridge.

3-5: Media Invited to See Hardware Built to Test Astronaut Escape System: Reporters are invited to see a mock-up of the Constellation Program's Orion

crew vehicle at NASA's Langley Research Center on Wednesday, March 12. The simulated capsule will be used in the first short-range flight test of the spacecraft's astronaut escape system. Project managers from Langley and NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston will be available to brief media. Media interested attending the presentation and briefing should contact Emily Outen by noon, March 11, at 757-864-7022, 757-272-9859 or 757-344-7211. NASA's Image of the Day Gallery for March 5 features the mockup. View the picture at: http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/image_feature_1033.html. For more information about NASA's Constellation Program, visit: <http://www.nasa.gov/constellation>.

3-3: NASA Spacecraft Photographs Avalanches on Mars:

A NASA spacecraft in orbit around Mars has taken the first ever image of active avalanches near the Red Planet's north pole. The image shows tan clouds billowing away from the foot of a towering slope, where ice and dust have just cascaded down. The High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) on NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter took the photograph Feb. 19. It is one of approximately 2,400 HiRISE images recently released. The camera is looking repeatedly at selected places on Mars to track seasonal changes. However, the main target of the Feb. 19 image was not the steep slope. The full image reveals features as small as a desk in a strip of terrain 3.7 miles wide and more than 10 times that long, at 84 degrees north latitude. Reddish layers known to be rich in water ice make up the face of a steep slope more than 2,300 feet tall, running the length of the image. The avalanche image and other selected images, are online at: <http://www.nasa.gov/mro>.



Upcoming Events

March 11: Space Shuttle Endeavour's STS-123 launch to the International Space Station

April 17: STSS ATRR launch for the Missile Defense Agency from Vandenberg Air Force Base

May 16: GLAST launch from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station

May 25: Space Shuttle Discovery's STS-124 launch to the International Space Station

June 15: OSTM/Jason 2 launch from the Vandenberg Air Force Base

Please send *A Look at NASA* Newsletter to me.

Name _____ Address _____
 Title _____ City _____
 E-mail address (required) _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____



There are only 404 days until the first Ares I test flight, Ares I-X