



50 Years of excellence

In the past five decades, NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center has established itself as the nation's premier rocket engine test facility. Since the 1960s, the American manned space program has ridden on rocket engines tested and proven flight-worthy at the south Mississippi facility. Established to test the Saturn V rocket stages that carried humans to the moon, Stennis Space Center evolved through the years to become a sprawling federal city home to federal, state, academic and private organizations and several technology-based companies. In addition, the Stennis Applied Science and Technology Project Office provides world-class project management to support NASA's science and technology needs. First called Mississippi Test Operations, the facility has been known by several names, but was named in honor of longtime Sen. John C. Stennis by presidential executive order in 1988. It has been led by 12 directors and has witnessed a number of historic moments.

NASAfacts

May 25, 1961 President John F. Kennedy sets a goal of sending humans to the moon by the end of the decade.

October 25, 1961 NASA announces decision to establish national rocket test site in Hancock County, Mississippi.

May 17, 1963 Workmen cut first tree to start construction of Stennis.

April 23, 1966 First Saturn V rocket booster (S-II-T) is tested at Stennis.

September 9, 1970 NASA announces the Earth Resources Laboratory will locate at Stennis.

March 1, 1971 NASA announces Stennis will test space shuttle main engines.

May 19, 1975 Stennis conducts first space shuttle main engine test.

May 28, 1976 Flag-raising ceremony marks the official move of the Naval Oceanographic Program to Stennis.



Workers clear land for construction of Stennis on May 17, 1963.



An S-II-T Saturn V rocket stage is installed on the A-2 Test Stand for testing on Oct. 18, 1965.

April 21, 1978 Stennis conducts first system test of the Space Shuttle Main Propulsion Test Article, which consists of three space shuttle main engines in launch configuration and fired simultaneously.

February 25, 1988 Stennis conducts 1,000th test firing of space shuttle main engine.

January 18, 1989 Construction begins on the Component Test Facility to test turbopump machinery for rocket propulsion systems. The facility is now the versatile, three-stand E Test Complex, with seven separate test cells capable of supplying ultra high-pressure gases and cryogenic fluids.

August 20, 1990 For the first time, space shuttle main engine tests are conducted on all three test stands in one day.

December 30, 1991 NASA administrator designates Stennis as the Center of Excellence for large propulsion system testing.

- July 24, 1992** Stennis conducts its 2,000th space shuttle main engine test.
- May 30, 1996** NASA designates Stennis as the lead center to manage capabilities and assets for rocket propulsion testing.
- February 21, 1997** Stennis is designated NASA's lead center for implementing commercial remote sensing activities.
- August 5, 2002** Ribbon cutting ceremonies are held for three new facilities at Stennis, collectively valued at more than \$60 million. The facilities include the Lockheed Martin Mississippi Space and Technology Center, the Naval Small Craft Instructional and Technical Training School and Special Boat Unit 22, and the Naval Oceanographic Office Warfighting Support and Survey Operations Center.
- January 21, 2004** The space shuttle main engine achieves a significant milestone during a Stennis test – one million seconds of test and flight operations.



Stennis conducts the last scheduled space shuttle main engine test on the A-2 Test Stand on July 29, 2009.



Construction continues on the simulated high-altitude A-3 Test Stand, scheduled for activation in 2012.

- August 11, 2005** Stennis celebrates the 30th anniversary of space shuttle main engine testing at the facility.
- August 29, 2005** Hurricane Katrina makes landfall, with its eye passing directly over Stennis Space Center.
- April 21, 2006** Stennis marks the 40th anniversary of the facility's first engine test.
- May 8, 2007** NASA announces the decision to build a new test stand at Stennis for simulated high-altitude testing of next-generation rocket engines.
- December 18, 2007** Stennis conducts a "chill test" on the A-1 Test Stand to begin a series of tests on Powerpack 1A, to be used on the next-generation J-2X engine being developed to carry humans into deep space.
- October 22, 2008** Stennis conducts a flight certification test on engine 2061, the last space shuttle main flight engine scheduled to be built.

April 9, 2009 Structural steel work is completed on the A-3 Test Stand. Completion and activation of the stand is scheduled for 2012.

July 29, 2009 The last scheduled test of a space shuttle main engine is conducted at the A-2 Test Stand.

November 10, 2010 Stennis conducts the first successful test firing of the Aerojet AJ26 rocket engine for Orbital Sciences Corporation, which has partnered with NASA to provide cargo space flights. The test project is part of NASA's new emphasis on partnering with companies to provide commercial flights to space.



Stennis conducts first hotfire test of an Aerojet AJ26 rocket engine for Orbital Sciences Corporation on Nov. 10, 2010.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

John C. Stennis Space Center
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529-6000
(228) 688-3333

www.nasa.gov