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MARSHALL STAR

In This Week's Star ⊟ (Click to Expand)

More Than 4,400 Celebrate the Space Shuttle Program Aug. 20 with Astronauts, Live Music, Fireworks

The U.S. Space & Rocket Center was hopping Aug. 20 with more than 4,400 people from the Huntsville community celebrating the successful completion of the Space Shuttle Program. The evening included a meal, a tour of the rocket center, live music and a shuttle program led by Center Director Robert Lightfoot. The event also featured space rides, astronaut autographs and a spectacular fireworks display to close the evening.

Astronaut Lee Morin hands an autographed picture to a child during the one of the two autograph sessions during the "Celebrate the Ride" shuttle event Aug. 20. (NASA/MSFC/Emmett Given)

Marshall Space Flight Center Director Robert Lightfoot addresses a packed crowd during the shuttle ceremony in Shuttle Park at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. (NASA/MSFC/Emmett Given)

Marshall Shuttle Propulsion Office Manager Steve Cash, left, presents a mission pin plaque to John Shannon, manager of the Space Shuttle Program. (NASA/MSFC/Emmett Given)

The Army Materiel Command Rock Band performs in Rocket Park while a small crowd dances to the music. (NASA/MSFC/Emmett Given)

Guests were treated to a fabulous fireworks display near the Davidson Center at the end of the night. (NASA/MSFC/Emmett Given)

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The National Institute for Rocket Propulsion Systems Key to Maintaining Expertise
By Kim Newton

The National Institute for Rocket Propulsion Systems, or NIRPS, is being created to provide stewardship of our nation's propulsion capabilities, understanding that they play a vital role in national security, economic competitiveness, and the continued exploration of space. The Institute will support the preservation and advancement of government and industry propulsion capabilities to meet current and future aerospace needs for civil and federal agencies.

"There's no arguing an Institute like this is needed to preserve our nation's propulsion industry base," said Marshall Space Flight Center Director Robert Lightfoot. "Solutions to science and technology problems related to rocket and missile propulsion can require knowledge from multiple fields of expertise. The Institute will foster a collaborative environment that will unify numerous efforts in the propulsion community."

The Institute is being formed in response to widely acknowledged concern regarding the U.S. propulsion industry base. Erosion of this capability has been cited in numerous trade and independent studies. U.S. leadership in rocket and missile propulsion is threatened by long-term industry downsizing, a shortage of new solid and liquid propulsion programs, ability to attract and retain fresh talent, and pressure on discretionary federal budgets expected to continue for at least a decade.

The Institute will take a three-part approach. First will be stewardship, or monitoring and analyzing the state of the industry in order to formulate and recommend national policy options and strategies that promote a healthy industrial base. This ensures the best-value for the American taxpayer. Second is identifying technology needs and recommending technology insertions by leading roadmap assessments and actively participating in program formulation activities. Third will be a solutions facilitator maintaining relationships and awareness across the industry to align available capacity with emerging demands.

"NASA's partners in governing and operating the Institute will include components of the Department of Defense and potentially other federal agencies," said associate director for technical issues and Marshall lead for the National Institute for Propulsion Systems Dr. Dale Thomas. "The broader propulsion industry, to include private organizations and academia, will also serve important roles in the Institute."

Currently the Institute is in the advanced planning stage. To date, many key defense, civil and commercial space stakeholders have been consulted and are supportive of the Institute and its objectives. Within NASA, this effort has been

coordinated with the propulsion community to include NASA Headquarters, Ames Research Center, Stennis Space Center, Kennedy Space Center, Glenn Research Center and Johnson Space Center.

NASA will serve as sole sponsor for the Institute's initial operations. As it matures, the Institute will seek sponsorship from other government agencies to support its baseline activities. Sponsorship may take several forms, including funding, co-located personnel from other agencies, access subject matter experts, access to unique facilities, etc.

In the role of steward and integrator, the Institute will integrate information and industry status with all parties related to the industrial base to provide policy recommendations to the U.S. government.

The Institute would be the "go-to" source for the NASA, Federal Aviation Administration-spaceflight, Department of Defense, and commercial spaceflight solutions, assisting with development and/or operational challenges that may occur as new systems come online. The Institute will contribute to the success of such ventures by providing the full range of solutions from support of design, development, test and evaluation efforts, to collaborating with the entity needing assistance, to simply providing the technical expertise to review the issue resolution.

The Institute will provide educational and training opportunities to engage college and school-aged children in next-generation propulsion technologies, training a future generation of rocket propulsion experts.

Newton is a public affairs officer in the Office of Strategic Analysis & Communications.

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28 Marshall Team Members Honored with Silver Snoopy Recognition

By Amie Cotton

On Aug. 3, 28 Marshall team members were honored with the coveted Silver Snoopy award. Astronauts Jack Fischer and Mark Vande Hei presented the awards during a ceremony at the Educator Resource Center at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. Marshall Deputy Director Gene Goldman and Herb Shivers, acting director of Marshall's Safety & Mission Assurance Directorate, joined astronauts in the presentation.

Since 1968, NASA's Space Flight Awareness Program has awarded the Silver Snoopy Award to outstanding civil service and contractor employees who have significantly contributed to the human spaceflight program. The prestigious honor is awarded only by astronauts and includes a silver pin flown onboard a shuttle mission with the famous "Peanuts" comic strip dog, Snoopy, dressed in an astronaut suit. Honorees also receive a framed certificate and a congratulatory letter personally signed by astronauts.

Image right: Silver Snoopy honorees and astronauts Jack Fischer and Mark Vande Hei gather at the Educator Resource Center Aug. 3. (NASA/MSFC)

Honorees included Lynn Albritton, Teledyne Brown Engineering; Alyssa Bermea, ASRI, Inc.; Joseph Brunty, Engineering Directorate; Rickey Clements, Safety & Mission Assurance; Mary K. (Kathy) Cooper, Office of Procurement; Wendy Cruit, Engineering Directorate; Gary Dempsey, COLSA; Wendell DeWeese, Engineering Directorate; Mercedes Galloway, Engineering Directorate; Joel Hardy, Teledyne Brown Engineering; Rebecca Hopson, Office of Center Operations; Martin Johnson, Engineering Directorate; Kenneth King, Engineering Directorate; Deborah Ledbetter, Engineering Directorate; Walter McGregor, Jacobs; Annette Metcalf-Coffel, Office of the Director; Mona Miller, Office of Human Capital; James D. (Daryl) Moore, Safety & Mission Assurance Directorate; Kristin Morgan, Engineering Directorate; Art Nunes, Engineering Directorate; Stanley Oliver, Engineering Directorate; Darren Reed, Engineering Directorate; Lisa Scaffardi, Teledyne Brown Engineering; Donna Simpson, Engineering Directorate; Jonathan Stephens, Engineering Directorate; Wendy Sullivan, Office of Human Capital; John (Dan) Thompson, Safety & Mission Assurance Directorate; Gary Thornton, Engineering Directorate.

Cotton, an AI Signal Research Inc. employee and the Marshall Star editor, supports the Office of Strategic Analysis & Communications.

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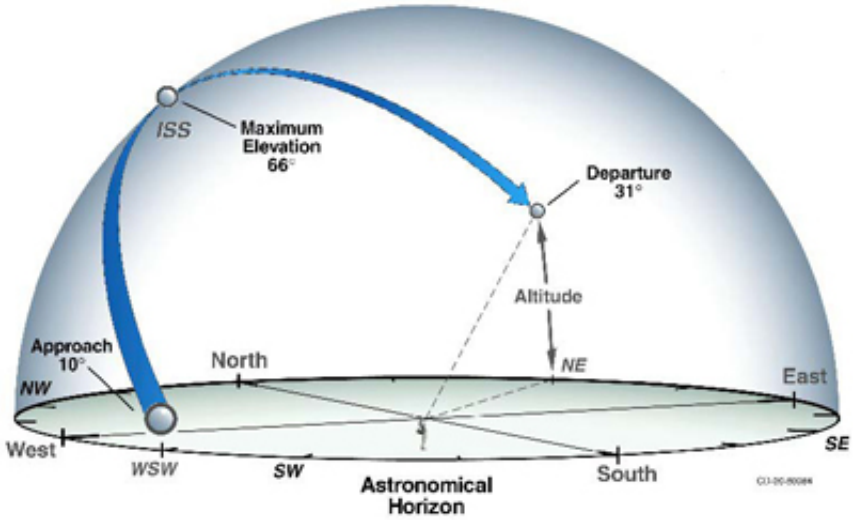
See Space Station Fly Over Huntsville on Aug. 27-31



Want to see the International Space Station fly over your house? Grab your family and run outside because there are five nightly opportunities from Aug. 27-31. For times and locations, click here.

Image left: Satellite sighting graphic shows how to locate a satellite during a viewing opportunity. (Richard Czentorycki (RSIS)/NASA)

A good pair of field binoculars may reveal some detail of the structural shape of the spacecraft, however, because of the speed of the orbiting vehicle, telescopes are not practical. The station will be seen as a steady -- not blinking -- white pinpoint of light moving slowly across the sky.

For more information about the space station, click here.

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Marshall Honors Recipients of 2011 NASA College Scholarships

Marshall Space Flight Center Director Robert Lightfoot, left, awards Anna Morgan Crumbley, second from right, with a prestigious 2011 NASA College Scholarship. Joining her is her mother Ashlyn, second from left, sister Mae, center, and father Tim, right. (NASA/MSFC)

Matthew Volz, second from right, is awarded a 2011 NASA College Scholarship by Marshall Deputy Director Gene Goldman, right, while Volz's parents Martin and Sue, look on. (NASA/MSFC)

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NASA Explorer School Teachers Visit Marshall to Learn About Water Filtration

In July, 10 teachers from across the country visited the Marshall Space Flight Center as part of a NASA Explorer Schools' recognition opportunity. The visit was designed to help teachers bring hands-on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) content into their classrooms. While here, the teachers focused on water filtration and toured various parts of the center. Tim Vaughn, materials engineer supervisor in the Materials & Processes Laboratory, center, gives the teachers a tour of the friction stir-welding center in Building 4755. The teachers also visited the Little River Canyon Center and the Huntsville

Utilities Water-Treatment Facility to learn about the different water treatments. (NASA/MSFC)

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Marshall Center Interns Showcase Experience at Annual Poster Day Event

Marshall Space Flight Center summer intern Kurt Kienast, left, a mechanical engineering student at Rice University, explains friction stir welding to Gail Gordon, branch chief of Marshall's Materials and Processes Lab, during the Aug. 3 Summer Intern Poster Day event. The event is designed to showcase the students' hands-on experiences and results of their internships. Kienast's poster was awarded second place, garnering a cash prize of $750. Marshall's Academic Affairs Office, part of the Office of Human Capital, organizes the event annually and manages the internships. (NASA/MSFC)

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http://www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/about/star/index.html