



KSC Countdown

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Vacant position near KSC's top fills with familiar face

◆ Parsons Gets New Role at KSC:

Bill Parsons, former space shuttle program manager at KSC and currently director of the agency's Stennis Space Center in Mississippi, has accepted the position of deputy center director at Kennedy Space Center, effective in mid-February. After the Columbia tragedy, Parsons was selected to direct NASA's return-to-flight efforts as space shuttle program manager, and he directed last summer's successful flight of Discovery during STS-114. Parsons became Stennis director in September 2005. As deputy director, he succeeds Dr. Woodrow Whitlow Jr., who was named the director of Glenn Research Center in December.

◆ **ELV Update:** The next scheduled ELV launch is Space Technology 5 (ST5) from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California on Feb. 28. Launch will be from an Orbital Sciences Pegasus XL vehicle. Pegasus Flight Simulation No. 2 was scheduled this week. ST5 thermal blanket closeouts have been completed, as well as a limited spacecraft functional test and weighing of the payload.

■ **NASA's Third Project Management Challenge Conference** — The conference is being held in Galveston, Texas, March 21 to 22. You can register online at <http://pmchallenge.gsfc.nasa.gov/re>

ELV focus moves to California, launch of Space Technology 5

[gistration2006.htm](http://www.nasa.gov/centers/kennedy/news/countdown/countdown-toc.html). The theme for this year's conference is "Putting Ideas Into Action!" The speaker biographies and presentation topic abstracts for the conference are now posted on the conference Web site at <http://pmchallenge.gsfc.nasa.gov/program.htm#Programsummary>.

■ **FIRST Robotics Competition** — Volunteers are needed for the 2006 FIRST (For the Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Florida Regional Competition at the University of Central Florida Arena, March 9 to 11. If you are interested in helping to make this event a continued success, please register at www.usfirst.org and choose "For Volunteers" in the upper right corner. ALL volunteers MUST register in order to be assigned a volunteer position. Volunteers are needed from set-up on March 8 to breakdown on March 11 and it is desirable that they work a whole day, with the optimum being all three days! A volunteer dinner to kick off the event is scheduled for March 8 at the Arena. For more information, visit <http://www.firstfloridaregional.org>. If you have questions, please contact Laurel Lichtenberger at 867-4036.

■ **FEW Annual Training Program** — A one-day Leadership and Personal Improvement training program will be presented on March

1, and repeated on March 2, at the Holiday Inn in Cocoa Beach. The keynote speaker will be Rita M. Murray, president of Performance Consulting, and her topic is "Survive and Thrive in a Multi-Generational World." For information, contact Jean Grenville, 453-0226.

■ **Reminder** — Today is the last day badged employees of KSC and CCAFS will be able to view GlobalFlyer at the tow-way hangar adjacent to the Shuttle Landing Facility. With their supervisor's permission, employees may drive out to the hangar facility between 2 and 5 p.m. to see the aircraft. If weather and operational preparations permit, the aircraft will be positioned just outside the hangar to facilitate photos. Employees must remain outside the controlled area. GlobalFlyer could launch from KSC's Shuttle Landing Facility as early as Jan. 31. Also, a videotape replay of Steve Fossett's briefing to KSC employees will be aired on NASA TV at 11 a.m. today. For more information, contact Jim Ball at 867-2998.

■ **Did You Know?** The Mars rover Opportunity began its third year on Mars Tuesday. It is examining bedrock exposures along a route between "Endurance" and "Victoria" craters. Opportunity has found evidence of a long-ago habitat of standing water on Mars.

KSC Countdown is published every Tuesday & Thursday. Deadlines are 10 a.m. Mondays & Wednesdays.

E-mail news to Anita.Barrett@jbosc.ksc.nasa.gov. For questions or information, e-mail or call 321-867-2815.

Find KSC Countdown on the Internet at <http://www.nasa.gov/centers/kennedy/news/countdown/countdown-toc.html>