



KSC Countdown

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Processing advances on three shuttle orbiters



◆ Shuttle Update:

On Thursday, Space Shuttle Program management set a launch date of no

earlier than May 10 for **Discovery's** launch to the International Space Station. Following the installation of the space shuttle main engines on Discovery, technicians have added a dome-mounted heat shield around each engine.

Technicians continue processing **Atlantis** in Orbiter Processing Facility bay 1 for its mission to the International Space Station, scheduled for no earlier than Aug. 28. The vehicle remains in a scheduled powered-down period, with the next power-up to occur as early as this week.

Leak checks of water coolant loop No. 1 were successfully completed. Servicing of that loop is scheduled for the middle of this week. Work on the shuttle's thermal protection system, or heat shield, continues with gap filler removal and replacements.

In Orbiter Processing Facility bay 2, work continues on **Endeavour** following an extensive modification period. The vehicle remains in a powered-down period, and technicians continue to implement the new return-to-flight modifications to Endeavour. Rigging of both the elbow and shoulder for the remote manipulator system, or shuttle arm,

continues. Final work continues on the reinforced carbon-carbon nose cap. It is scheduled to be installed into the vehicle next week.

◆ **ISS Update:** Last week, International Space Station Commander Bill McArthur replaced the trace contaminant control system in the Destiny Laboratory. The system removes impurities from the cabin air. It experienced a slightly degraded performance over the past few months, but now is operating normally.

On Monday, McArthur was scheduled to attempt to reconnect and activate the major constituent analyzer in Destiny. It is a mass spectrometer that measures compounds in the station's atmosphere. Efforts to activate the system two weeks ago were unsuccessful due to what is believed to be damaged or bent electrical connectors.

Once the device is activated, plans can resume for a crew "campout" in the Quest Airlock to test streamlined spacewalk preparation procedures. The new procedures will shorten the time needed to cleanse nitrogen from the bodies of spacewalkers to prevent decompression sickness. For the test, the crew will spend the night in Quest at a reduced pressure, lessening the time needed to breathe pure oxygen in advance of a spacewalk.

The campout technique will be

Expedition 12 crew looks forward to 'campout'

used for the first time for spacewalks on the STS-115 shuttle mission later this year. If the major constituent analyzer is successfully activated, the campout test will be scheduled around March 23.

McArthur continued preparations for the arrival of the next shuttle mission, targeted for launch no earlier than May 10. McArthur put unneeded items in racks earmarked for return to Earth aboard Discovery.

■ **NASA Science** — Backyard astronomers, grab your telescopes. Jupiter is growing a new red spot. The official name of this storm is "Oval BA," but "Red Jr." might be better. It's about half the size of the famous Great Red Spot and almost exactly the same color. You can read more about it at the Web site http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2006/02mar_redjr.htm?list29875.



■ **Did You Know?** Heart disease is the number one killer among both men and women. Join the fight against heart disease and learn how to prevent it. A presentation at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday in the O&C Building, Room 3132 (conference room), will include information on the prevalence of heart disease in our society today, along with what the risk factors are for heart disease and ways to reduce them. Stop by and learn what you can do.

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

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