



countdown

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Discovery's crew prepares orbiter for Thursday link to ISS

NASA satellite takes bird's-eye view of California fires



◆ **Mission Update:** Following Discovery's launch on Tuesday, the seven crew members aboard opened the shuttle's payload bay doors, successfully deployed the Ku-band antenna that provides high-data-rate communications and television, and checked out the shuttle's robotic arm. They also transmitted video and photographs of the shuttle's external tank to the ground for standard post-launch analysis by engineers.

On Wednesday, the crew performed a close inspection of Discovery's heat shield using the shuttle's robotic arm and the orbiter boom sensor system. They also checked the spacesuits that will be used for spacewalks during the mission and installed a centerline camera in the shuttle docking hatch that will be used to help align the vehicle for docking Thursday morning.

◆ **NASA News:** A NASA satellite has captured a remarkable image of the wildfires raging in Southern California. At least 14 massive fires have scorched about 425 square miles from north of Los Angeles to southeast of San Diego.

The image, captured by NASA's Aqua satellite on Monday afternoon, shows the thick, billowing smoke coming off the numerous large fires and spreading over the Pacific Ocean. Fire activity is outlined in red.

Dry, drought-stricken vegetation and Santa Ana winds, which can reach hurricane speeds, have fueled the blazes. The National Interagency Fire Center reported that the Santa Ana winds were expected to continue through Wednesday.

To view and download images and for additional information, visit: http://www.nasa.gov/vision/earth/lookingeath/socal_wildfires_oct07.html.

■ **NASA 50th Anniversary Essay Contest for Students** — The NASA 50th anniversary essay competition for middle and junior high school students is now accepting entries. The competition comprises two separate topics, each with a limit of 500 words. The first topic challenges students to describe how they benefit in their everyday lives from space technologies built by NASA over the last 50 years. The second topic requires students to imagine how their everyday lives will have changed because of NASA space technology in the next 50 years.

Students may submit two essays, each responding to a separate topic. Participants must be U.S. students in grades 5-9 and under the age of 15.

An optional notice of intent is due on Dec. 7. Final entries are due on or before Jan. 7. For more information, visit: http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/5-8/features/E_Essay_Competition.html.

■ **Save Your Yoplait Yogurt Lids!** — The Federally Employed Women in the Space Coast Chapter are collecting pink Yoplait yogurt lids through Dec. 31 to send to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. For every pink lid mailed

in, Yoplait will donate 10 cents to the foundation, up to \$1.5 million. And they guarantee to donate at least \$500,000. Please wash your lids and forward them to: Sandra Getter, Community Outreach Chairwoman, NE-E8.

■ **Mark Your Calendars for PM Expo 2008!** The expo will be held Feb. 26-27 at the Hilton Oceanfront Hotel in Daytona Beach. Registration will open Nov. 14. The registration fee is \$375, which includes continental breakfast, lunch and the Tuesday evening reception. For more information, see the Web site at <http://www.pmx2008.info>, or contact Kari Bako at 703-773-3059 or e-mail kari.bako@valador.com.

Non-NASA parties have access to the NASA PM Challenge 2008 track sessions and general sessions, as well as unique exhibits and networking opportunities, through participation in "PM Challenge EXPO 2008," sponsored by Valador Inc.

■ **Reminder** — The flu vaccine will be administered on a first-come, first-served basis during normal clinic hours:

Occupational Health Facility (KSC Industrial Area), 7 a.m.- 5 p.m.

Launch Area Clinic (KSC LC-39 Area, MFF Facility), 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. (no appointment necessary).

Countdown is published every Tuesday & Thursday for NASA KSC employees. Deadlines are 10 a.m. Mondays & Wednesdays. E-mail news to anita.barrett@jpsc.nasa.gov. For questions or information, e-mail or call 321-867-2815. You can also find *Countdown* on the Web at nasa.gov/centers/kennedy/news/countdown/countdown-toc.html.