



countdown

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Two days to launch and counting for STS-122 mission



◆ **Shuttle Update:** The STS-122 launch countdown began at 7 p.m. Monday at T-43 hours. The countdown includes 26 hours and 31 minutes of built-in hold time leading to a preferred launch time of 4:31 p.m. Thursday. The launch window extends until 4:36 p.m. At Launch Pad 39A, final preparations for launch are under way on space shuttle **Atlantis**. Closing out of the orbiter aft main engine compartment and installation and connection of ordnance on the orbiter and solid rocket boosters are complete. Checkout and stowage of the extravehicular mobility units, or space suits, in the orbiter airlock are finished, and the airlock has been closed for flight. The payload bay doors were closed for flight on Monday.

On **Endeavour**, following electrical resistance testing of the orbiter boom sensor system, which is the 50-foot extension for the shuttle robotic arm, the boom was installed in the payload bay. Hardware that will support the STS-123 payload was also installed in the payload bay. The landing gear functional test is scheduled for Dec. 8-9.

The STS-123 crew flew to Kennedy Space Center on Friday for the crew equipment interface test. During the test, the crew gets the opportunity to become familiar with the configuration of equipment in the crew cabin and payload bay.

In high bay No. 1 of the Vehicle Assembly Building, stacking of the solid rocket boosters is under way. ET-126, the

external fuel tank for STS-123, arrived at Kennedy Friday and was transported to the transfer aisle of the Vehicle Assembly Building. The tank was lifted into a checkout cell to undergo processing for launch on Saturday.

◆ Mark Your Calendars for the Annual Kennedy Holiday Coffee!

Center Director Bill Parsons invites all civil service and contactor employees to enjoy refreshments and to exchange greetings of the season with your friends and co-workers at the KSC Learning Institute (behind the Headquarters Bldg.) from 8:30 to 10 a.m. on Dec. 14. On Dec. 13, refreshments will be provided to second and third shift employees and management in the OSB I Lobby from 10 p.m. – midnight, compliments of NASA senior management.



■ **Reach Higher! NASA PM Challenge 2008 registration is now open** — Share your knowledge of project management, safety, systems engineering, communications, team building, lessons learned, engineering management, acquisition, leadership and other topics with your NASA colleagues at the agency's fifth PM Challenge conference Feb. 26-27 in Daytona Beach. Register online at:

<http://pmchallenge.gsfc.nasa.gov/registration2008.htm>. Registration closes Jan. 31. For full conference details, go to: <http://pmchallenge.gsfc.nasa.gov>.

■ **NASA 50th Anniversary Essay Contest for Students** — The NASA 50th anniversary essay competition for middle

Employees invited to annual coffee to share season greetings

and junior high school students is now accepting entries. The competition consists of 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 in the next 50 years will have changed because of NASA space technology. Students may submit two separate essays, each responding to a separate topic. Participants must be U.S. students in grades 5-9 and under the age of 15. A notice of intent* is requested by Dec. 7. The final entry is due on or before Jan. 7.

(*A notice of intent is appreciated but not required for essay submissions. The notice of intent tells NASA that you plan to enter the competition. This helps determine how many reviewers will be needed for the final entries.)

For more information, visit:

http://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/5-8/features/F_Essay_Competition.html.

■ **Holiday Open House by Rehab-Works** — Join the staff between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Dec. 11 in the O&C/Room 1135. Food and consultations will be provided.

Countdown is published every Tuesday & Thursday for NASA KSC employees. Deadlines are 10 a.m. Mondays & Wednesdays. E-mail news to anita.barrett@josc.ksc.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.