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Spaceport News

John F. Kennedy Space Center - America's gateway to the universe

www.nasa.gov/centers/kennedy/news/snews/spnews_toc.html

NASA

Ramiro Saldivar, an electrical engineer with United Space Alliance, can be seen behind the controls during the transport of space shuttle Atlantis during the STS-117 mission.

Crawler group keeps shuttle rolling along

By Linda Herridge
Staff Writer

Ramiro Saldivar, an electrical engineer with United Space Alliance, travels where only a few have traveled before. Saldivar is one of a handful of certified drivers who sit inside the cab of the giant crawler transporter as it carries a space shuttle atop a mobile launcher platform from the Vehicle Assembly Building on its trek to the launch pad.

"Working at Kennedy Space Center is special for me," Saldivar said. "Not everyone gets to drive the crawler and I don't take it for granted." Saldivar was sitting in the driver's seat during rollout May 3 of Discovery to Launch Pad 39A for the STS-124 mission.

Each of NASA's two Apollo-era crawlers weighs in at nearly 6.5 million pounds. Add the space shuttle and mobile launcher platform, and it's nearly 18 million pounds traveling at a whopping 1 mph. Each transporter travels on eight tracked tread belts, each containing 57 tread belt "shoes." The unique shoes are 7.5 feet long, 1.5 feet wide and weigh about 2,100 pounds each.

Ray Trapp, USA manager of the Crawler Transporter Group, said it takes at least 20 workers, sometimes working around the clock, to complete the rollout process.

"The process is kind of like (that of) a Super Bowl," Trapp said. "Everything we do leads up to this very important event."

Trapp, who has worked at Kennedy for 19 years, said a precise set of events occurs during each roll out. Technicians and engineers take their places inside the huge transporter's control room to monitor hydraulics, AC and

See **CRAWLER,** Page 8

Spaceport firefighters join Brevard fire fight

On Mother's Day, fires sparked up around Brevard County, with homes and thousands of acres burning before the day was over.

However, the fires were brought under control through a combined effort between a strike team comprised of Spaceport personnel and Brevard County and Osceola County fire units.

After getting proper approval through Air Force and NASA channels, the strike team helped to fight a fast moving fire that had jumped Interstate 95 and was encroaching on houses and the landfill in the vicinity of Satellite Boulevard in Cocoa.

There they used two aircraft rescue and fire fighting vehicles, one structural pumper and one command vehicle with 11 personnel. Chief Norb Kuhman provided initial assistance at the on-site command post.

Included in the fire fight were two Air National Guard helicopters that continually dropped water onto the burning brush.

The strike team provided continuous fire fighting operations in this area protecting houses, support buildings at the landfill and putting out fires near the landfill. Units were on-scene throughout the evening.

For the next three days, the strike team faced more brush fires that quickly became national news. Air Force and NASA personnel remained on call the rest of the week due to the strong winds and low humidity which kept the brush fire threat up.

NASA

Spaceport workers put in many long hours several weeks ago when brush fires broke out around Brevard County.

Community leaders share vision of Kennedy's future

By Jennifer Wolfinger
Staff Writer

Influential policy-makers gathered at the Kennedy Space Center Community Leaders Breakfast on May 23 to learn about important center accomplishments and future milestones.

Lisa Malone, Director of External Relations, and the event's Master of Ceremony, welcomed the group to the briefing, which took place at the KSC Visitor Complex Debus Conference Facility. Cocoa Beach Jr./Sr. High students Jordan Hicks and Gia Roche then sang the national anthem before Kennedy Center Director Bill Parsons addressed guests.

Parsons urged everyone to honor the country's veterans during Memorial Day, and discussed the center's economic impact explaining that the average salary is significantly higher than most in the area and for every one Kennedy job there are 1.5 connected to the center. He also listed upcoming significant events and commented on the impressive backing Kennedy gets from community leaders.

"We get the kind of support here in Florida to do the work we need to do. As things change within the space business, support is tremendous," he said.

Edward Mango, Launch Vehicle Processing deputy director, gave attendees a space shuttle status. He highlighted the five successful missions from the past 12 months, and explained that after the STS-124 mission, the organization will have reached the halfway point on their launch manifest that is scheduled to end in 2010.

Russell Romanella, International Space Station/Spacecraft processing director, discussed the space station, which he considers one of the greatest engineering accomplishments and a key factor in completing NASA's exploration mission. He explained how there are control rooms all over the world supporting the structure, its current size versus its size at completion, and, that in November, the space station will celebrate its 10 year anniversary.

To highlight the progression of the Constellation Program, the Constellation Project Office Director Pepper Phillips described the different vehicles, stages, and facility modifications, the program's road map and upcoming test flights, and presented videos highlighting the effort.

"This program is real. This is the first step. It's really happening," Phillips said.

Amanda Mitskevich, the deputy manager of the Launch Services Program, provided an overview of the program including how it provides transportation for non-human spaceflights and supports four of NASA's six goals. She also listed the destinations of past missions, future mission plans, current and upcoming launch vehicles, and other highlights.

The Chief of Kennedy's Education Programs and University Research Division, Gregg Buckingham, explained their education goals. Through their efforts, the division staff begins impacting students as young as elementary age and they continue to do so by creating programs to grow the future team that NASA needs.

After commenting on how smart and creative the previous speakers are, Buckingham said, "It's our job to make sure we've got the work force we need to carry out the missions described."

Guests were then encouraged to learn more about NASA by enjoying the KSC Visitor Complex's educational attractions.

NASA/Dimitri Gerondidakis

Kennedy Center Director Bill Parsons addressed hundreds of influential public leaders at the Kennedy Space Center Community Leaders Breakfast on May 23.

15th Mode VIII simulation run to perfection

By Cheryl Mansfield
Staff Writer

Early in the morning along the Central Florida's East Coast, rescue teams on land, sea and in the air sprang to action. Helicopters were silhouetted against the sky, boats cut through the choppy seas, and military leaders huddled over computer monitors displaying real-time tracking.

The ocean search and rescue was only a drill -- a cooperative effort between NASA and the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security -- but the scenario played out like a real space shuttle launch-day emergency. It simulated a situation where a space shuttle crew would need to bail out of their orbiter after liftoff and be rescued from the Atlantic Ocean.

The exercise -- known as Mode VIII -- was made as realistic as possible with complicated medical and communications challenges that would be experienced in a real bail-out situation. The shuttle crew in the drill was made up of real astronauts and volunteers, with each assigned various medical needs during the rescue.

Unlike other such drills in the past, this one concentrated on a launch path that will be used during space shuttle Atlantis' STS-125 Hubble repair mission this fall.

After liftoff, the shuttle will head eastward over the Atlantic Ocean instead of curving closer to the coast -- and putting a rescue effort farther out to sea.

This was the fifteenth Mode VIII drill. The first one was conducted almost 20 years ago. The teams involved in this most recent drill were able to sharpen their skills while demonstrating their ability to recover astronauts quickly and provide en route medical care.

While a sea rescue of a shuttle crew is the most complicated, the Mode VIII is just one of several emergency rescue drills conducted regularly at Kennedy Space Center.

NASA/Dimitri Gerondidakis

Astronauts are shown being rescued in a U.S. Coast Guard rescue boat in a rescue-training exercise, known as Mode VIII, Participants include members of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force, Kennedy Space Center and Johnson Space Center.

Soldiers share stories of overcoming adversities

By Kate Frakes
Staff Writer

In recognition of Kennedy Space Center's Annual Spring Diversity Event, employees gathered to learn how NASA helped wounded soldiers heal and how these diverse individuals build a strong work force.

Certified Prosthetist Orthotist and President of Point Health Systems, Dennis Clark described the impossible medical barriers that he, with NASA's contributions, was able to surpass by creating state of the art prosthetics for wounded soldiers. In high attendance, employees met at the Training Auditorium on May 15 to watch "Dr. Clark's Walter Reed Experience," which documented the prosthetic care Clark and his team of prosthetists provided at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. It also featured soldiers' sharing stories of overcoming their individual adversities and raised awareness on how important the contributions of qualified individuals with disabilities are to organizational success.

Kennedy's Manager of the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity Tara Gillam presented the opening address that encouraged NASA's centers to actively seek and hire qualified employees with physical and mental challenges. She explained that programs such as Clark's restore health and well-being and assist differently abled citizens to participate in the economic system, returning them to work in impressive numbers. Gillam said this year, NASA has placed great emphasis on increasing the hiring of these able people who are valuable in meeting the needs of our missions.

"We need to focus our attention on the men and women who bravely served and greatly sacrificed for the benefit of us all and for the freedoms that we take for granted," Gillam said.

Gillam also recognized National Peace Officer's Memorial Day. Founded in 1962 by President John F. Kennedy, the memorial honors those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives or have become disabled in the performance of duty. In a patriotic tribute, the Honor Guard of Patrick Air Force Base honored the U.S. Armed Forces in the presentation of colors and national anthem.

While working at Walter Reed Army Medical Center from October 2003 through May 2005, Clark and his team closed down their private practice and relocated to the center care for amputees that served in Iraq and Afghanistan. He believed that technology combined with quality care saved soldiers' lives.

Clark shared his first-hand account of innovative treatment strategies for rehabilitating wounded veterans. He explained that an outside-the-box philosophy restored hope and motivation to his patients and reopened the doors of possibility. He demonstrated how he solved one soldier's problem of arriving late to formation by creating an efficient push-button release to help change the shoes on his prosthetic legs more quickly.

"History shows that care of the traumatic combat amputee often leads to advances in overall amputee care," Clark said.

In their first few months at the center, the team saw more than 400 patients and quickly realized they needed to make a change. In collaboration with the NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., it was discovered that the space shuttle external tank foam insulation was the right consistency to carve out a replicatable shape for the use of prosthetics using new state of the art digital technology. Clark said the discovery was cost effective and increased the quality and accurateness of prosthetics worldwide.

Furthermore, Clark is a former president of the American Board for Certification for Orthotics and Prosthetics and he represented the American Academy Orthotists and Prosthetists at the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. In 2003, Clark was awarded the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists Distinguished Practitioner Award.

> ***"We need to focus our attention on the men and women who bravely served and greatly sacrificed for the benefit of us all and for the freedoms that we take for granted."***
>
> Tara Gilliam, Kennedy's manager of the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity

NASA/Dimitri Gerondidakis

Soldiers shared stories of overcoming their adversities and helped raise awareness on the importance of contributions made by qualified individuals with disablilities at "Dr. Clark's WalterReed Experience" on May 15.

Scene Around Kenn

for NASA

Teams comprised of workers from NASA, USA, JBOSC and Boeing Co. competed in the Insurance of America Corporate 5K on April 24, the largest 5K in Central Florida with more than 10,000 participants and 440 corporate teams participating.

for NASA

Jonsie Ivey, center, software engineer, receives a gold service pin and certificate from her managers Phil Kimbro, left, electrical engineering senior manager and Mike Bauernfeind, software engineering manager. Ivey logged more than 500 community service hours during 2007.

NASA/Kim Shiflett

NASA awarded its consolidated protective services contract to Coastal International Security, Inc. of Lorton, Va., as Kennedy workers look on. The contract has a maximum value of $1.56 billion, if all options are exercised. Work under the contract will provide fire services, security services, emergency management, export control, protective services information assurance/technology security, and protective services training throughout the agency. For more information, visit: www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2008/may/HQ_C08028_OSPP_Contract.html

nedy Space Center

NASA/Kim Shiflett

Workers help maneuver the GLAST spacecraft toward the opening above the Delta II second stage in the mobile service tower at Launch Pad 17-B at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

for NASA

Dr. Dale Lueck, who is retiring from the Applied Sciences Division of KT-D, gets ready to cut the cake at a coffee held in his honor on April 25 at Headquarters.

Spaceport News wants your photos

You are encouraged to send unique story ideas and exciting photos of workers in action for possible publication. Photos should include a short caption with the names and job titles, from left to right. Send e-mail to

KSC-Spaceport-News @mail.nasa.gov.

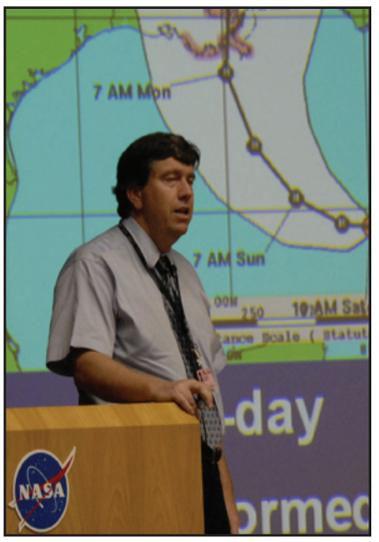
Warmer weather signifies beginning of hurricane season

By Kate Frakes
Staff Writer

With the upcoming arrival of the Atlantic hurricane season, Kennedy Space Center employees convened for the annual hurricane awareness training at the Training Auditorium on May 22. Organized by Space Gateway Support's emergency preparedness program, the event featured presentations by the National Hurricane Center Senior Hurricane Specialist Dr. Jack Beven, 45th Space Wing Launch Weather Officer Mike McAleenan, and Brevard County Senior Emergency Management Coordinator Charlie Roberts.

"Time is short with June being upon us," said Jim Hattaway, associate director for Business Operations. Even though there hasn't been activation at the center in two years, Hattaway explained how important it is for employees to get ready personally for a storm in addition to preparing at KSC.

Dr. Beven presented an overview of the new technology that was added to some of the preparedness products in weather advisories and forecasts. He said one of the NHC's goals this year is to improve predictions on a hurricane's expected intensity, adding that online programs are more available and user-friendly.



NASA/Dimitri Gerondidakis

Dr. Jack Beven was among the speakers at the annual hurricane awareness training May 22 at the Training Auditorium.

View info online

Additional resources regarding hurricane procedure can be found at Brevard County's Emergency Management's Web site at **http://brevardcounty.us/EOC**

"Since 1990, the NHC has decreased 50 percent in error," Beven said. He attributed the decrease to newer technology in model guidance and an increase in available data. In addition, policy regarding public advisories also have changed and require updates every 48 hours in preparation for a tropical storm. Information on storm surges and pacific storms also will be included.

McAleenan said foresight is key in planning for a hurricane. "Smart people prepare well ahead of time," he said. "It only takes one storm to ruin a whole season." Flooding, high winds, storm surges and tornadoes can occur up to 200 miles from a storm's center. McAleenan stated people on the borders of projected hurricane paths need to pay attention and be ready for a storm.

A mandatory evacuation would remove 250,000 residents whose homes sit in Brevard County's coastal at-risk areas. Roberts said it's not the numbers but whether you are prepared for the hurricane. He explained the importance of families having custom disaster kits and evacuation routes, adding that Brevard has hurricane shelters in north, central and south county locations.

Workers not able to attend the training session may view the Hurricane Awareness Training video, 24 hours a day on Ch. 50, from June 2-13.

A joint hurricane exercise between KSC, Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, and the 45th Space Wing will take place June 10-13 to practice the procedures in preparation for this year's season.

Engineer earns Fellow Member honor from corrosion group

By Linda Herridge
Staff Writer

Louis MacDowell, NASA Chief of the Materials Test and Chemical Analysis Branch at Kennedy Space Center, recently was named a Fellow Member by the National Association of Corrosion Engineers, or NACE International, during an international conference in New Orleans. MacDowell, who has been a member of NACE for 32 years, is the first NASA civil servant in the agency to receive this distinction.

"It was the culmination of a lot of work," MacDowell said. "And I give NASA and NACE a lot of credit for getting me to where I am in my career."

NACE International President Dr. Louis Vincent recognized MacDowell for his sustained contributions to the organization and to corrosion science, corrosion engineering and corrosion prevention.

MacDowell's career at Kennedy Space Center began in 1985, when he joined the Materials Science Lab as a corrosion engineer. As a matter of fact, he says he was the only NASA corrosion engineer at the center at the time.

He worked to build the lab's corrosion technology capability and became the manager of the Corrosion Technology Lab in 2000 with 10 or more researchers involved in projects for Kennedy, the Jet Propulsion Lab and other NASA facilities, the Department of Defense agencies, and other private industries throughout North America.

NASA

Louis Vincent, left, NACE International 2007-08 president, gives Louis MacDowell his Fellow Member Award.

He was at the forefront of using online methods to advance remote atmospheric corrosion testing and commercial protective coatings evaluation. With his guidance, the Kennedy beach front corrosion laboratory was connected to the Internet, allowing researchers anywhere in the world to access real-time, continuous monitoring of electrochemical data, as well as atmospheric weather information that could then be correlated with corrosion rates.

MacDowell moved to his current position in 2004, where he manages several labs and about 14 people.

He helps guide the Materials Testing Lab to perform compatibility, tensile strength, heat, flammability, electrostatic, vibration, and thermal vacuum testing of materials. The Chemical Test and Analysis Lab performs chemical analyses of materials and contaminant identification, including the identification of unknown solids, liquids and gases.

MacDowell keeps active in NACE and the corrosion community. He says Kennedy is the center that had the real problems with corrosion.

"In the labs we see the negative results of corrosion from failure analyses," MacDowell said. "We've learned lessons over the years with what works and what doesn't. Our ground systems have improved reliability now."

He said the new Materials and Processes Engineering Branch is starting to get involved with some analysis and testing for the Ares I-X test flight.

"We look forward to helping the new program with their materials testing and chemical analysis needs," MacDowell said.

MacDowell is a NACE-certified Corrosion Specialist, Protective Coatings Specialist, Cathodic Protection Specialist, Coatings Inspector, and Coating Inspector Program Peer Reviewer. He received a NACE Distinguished Service Award in 1997, and served as director of the NACE International Eastern Area, chair of the Southeast Region, and chair, trustee, and vice-chair of the Central Florida Section.

NACA transferred intact to NASA 50 years ago

By Kay Grinter
Reference Librarian

NASA file

This photo, taken May 26, 1958, shows members of NACA's Special Committee on Space Technology, which included, from right, Wernher von Braun (ABMA); Abe Silverstein (NACA Lewis); Dale Corson (Cornell University); Hugh Dryden (NACA Director, ex officio), H. Guyford Stever (Chairman); Carl Palmer (NACA, Secretary); J.R. Dempsey (General Dynamics); Rober Gilruth (NACA Langley); H. Julian Allen (NACA Ames); Milton Clauser (Ramo-Wooldridge); Samuel Hoffman (NAA Rocketdyne); W. Randolph Lovelace (Lovelace Foundation); Hendrik Bode (Bell BTL) (left of Lovelace); Abraham Hyatt (Chief Scientist, Navy BuAer); Col. Norman Appold, USAF (ARDC, with arm on table); and Edward Sharp (NACA Lewis).

Before there was an American space program or a government agency called the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, there was the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, or the NACA.

The outbreak of World War I served as a catalyst for the creation of the NACA. The enabling legislation was a rider on a Naval Appropriation Bill in 1915. The fledgling committee received a budget of $5,000.

Twelve unpaid aeronautical experts made up the "advisory committee" and met semi-annually in Washington. When the panel isolated a problem in some way related to flight, the study and solution were handed over to a government agency or university laboratory.

The first NACA facility was built across the river from Norfolk, Va., in collaboration with the U.S. Army. Named the Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory, it was dedicated in June 1920. The NACA's modest corner of "Langley Field," as it came to be known, employed a staff of 11.

Later, other NACA flight research facilities came into being, including the Ames Aeronautical Laboratory at Moffett Field in California and the Lewis Flight Propulsion Laboratory in Cleveland, Ohio.

Following World War II, more and more of the NACA's facilities, budget and expertise were devoted to missile research. In November 1957, the NACA set up a Special Committee on Space Technology, under the chairmanship of Dr. H. Guyford Stever of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The Stever Committee established seven working groups, one of which addressed the study of human factors including the biomedical requirements for manned space flight.

On Oct. 1, 1958, the NACA's three laboratories, now renamed research centers, and 8,000 employees were transferred to NASA.

Mary King was a personnel staffing specialist who transferred to Cape Canaveral from Langley in 1961, the year NASA began buying property for its manned launch site.

Remembering Our Heritage

"I helped with the transfer of former NACA employees into the Spacecraft Task Group in Houston and the Cape," she said, "as well as hire others from outside the agency."

King was in a unique position to meet everyone hired by NASA at the new launch site in Florida. "G. Merritt Preston was chief of the Preflight Operations Division of the Manned Spacecraft Center and transferred from the NACA at Lewis, as did his deputy, Doug Black."

Tom Curry started his career with NACA at Langley in 1957. Assigned to the Pilotless Aircraft Research Division, headed by Joe Shortal, he worked with several of the engineers already working on the Mercury capsule design.

As these engineers started to migrate to the new NASA Mercury Task Group at the Cape, Curry joined the migration and learned later from Mary King that he was the 32nd NASA employee to officially transfer to the Mercury Task Group at the Cape.

Curry's first Mercury assignment was in the NASA Mercury Coordination Office at Patrick Air Force Base, where he worked with a group led by NACA alumnus Phil Maloney, coordinating program requirements with the Air Force and ABMA for the Mercury-Redstone flights.

NACA alumnus Porter Brown led the engineers in the office coordinating with the Air Force and Convair for the Mercury-Atlas flights.

Thomas Walton was another NACA transplant from Langley. "Transitioning from the NACA to NASA was transparent to me," he said. "I don't remember any fuss at all. The move between agencies was just a matter of paperwork. I was born and raised in Clewiston and was eager to get back to Florida to work in the new and exciting space program."

Arriving in Florida in February 1961, Walton recalled, "There were 62 of us altogether involved with prelaunch operations on the spacecraft in Hangar S. The people assigned to launch vehicle preparations worked across the street." Many of NASA's early launch vehicle experts, including the renowned Wernher von Braun, transferred from the Army Ballistic Missile Agency in Huntsville, Ala.

Michael Wedding started at the NACA at Lewis. "Fresh out of college, I was a member of a group doing aircraft research when along came Sputnik," he recalled. "The country went 'bananas' over the Russians having a satellite in Earth orbit, and it set a fire in the government to start a space program. They asked a bunch of us already working in the fields of instrumentation and telemetry if we would like to join this new organization and move to Florida, to a place called Cape Canaveral.

"We flew down for a tour of the Cape in a C-47, which had no pressurization and seats along the side of the cargo area like they used to transport paratroopers in World War II. After our tour, we flew back to Cleveland and had to hike through several inches of snow from the runway to the terminal. That settled it for me, and my wife agreed. I signed on for Project Mercury to put an astronaut into space."

Wedding further reminisced, "At 26, I was just a whippersnapper. My wife and I rented an apartment on Cocoa Beach and were moving in on Halloween night in 1959."

James Rose transferred to NASA from the NACA at Langley. "I first came to the Cape to deliver a satellite for a Vanguard launch that failed," he explained. "I immediately went to work as an engineer on Project Mercury. However, my home base was with the Space Task Group in at Langley Field. I flew in and out of Florida, working with the astronauts on the development of the Mercury and Gemini spacecraft."

The National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics has been disbanded for 50 years.

WORD ON THE STREET

Where do you plan to view the launch of STS-124?

"I'm going to be planting some bushes at the Cocoa Beach Jr./Sr. High football field."

Mark Provancha, supervisor Earth systems modeling and data management laboratory with Dynamac

"The Shuttle Landing Facility. That's where we support the helicopters for astronaut rescue."

Robert Cummings, biomedical engineering technician with NASA

"From my parents' back yard in Cocoa Beach. They live right on the Banana River."

Tiffany Nail, Launch Services Specialist with NASA

"From the Morrell Operations Center on the Air Force side. We monitor the launch clouds."

Resa Cancro, senior GIS analyst with Dynamac

"At the Shuttle Landing Facility supporting Air Force helicopters."

Barry Slack, biomedical engineering technician with NASA

Looking up and ahead

Target May 31	Launch/KSC: Discovery, STS-124; at 5:02 p.m. EDT
NET June 3	Launch/CCAFS: Delta II, GLAST; 11:45 a.m.
June 15	Launch/VAFB: Delta II, OSTM/Jason II; 4:47 a.m.
TBD	Launch/CCAFS: Delta II, GPS 2R-20 (M7); 10:37 p.m.
TBD	Launch/CCAFS: Atlas V, WGS SV 2; 8:36 p.m.
Target Oct. 8	Launch/KSC: Atlantis, STS-125; TBD
Target Nov. 10	Launch/KSC: Endeavour, STS-126; TBD
NET Dec. 12	Launch/CCAFS: Delta IV, GOES-O; TBD
NET Nov. 13	Launch/CCAFS: Delta II, STSS; TBD
NET Nov. 24	Launch/CCAFS: Atlas V, LRO; TBD
NET Dec. 1	Launch/CCAFS: Atlas V, SDO; TBD

Spaceport News wants your photos

Send photos of yourself and/or your co-workers in action for possible publication. Photos should include a short caption, with names and job titles, from left to right. Send them to **KSC-Spaceport-News@mail.nasa.gov**

From **CRAWLER**, Page 1

DC power, pneumatics, steering, lubrication, instrumentation, jacking, equalizing and leveling and fire detection, alarm and protection functions through an integrated monitor and control system.

Several workers are stationed on the ground around the transporter and near the cab trucks as the vehicle moves through the VAB doors. They walk alongside, around and underneath the moving vehicle, trained to hear any unusual sounds and look for any problems, as well as serve as the eyes and ears of the drivers.

Though the trip to the pad takes about six hours, the entire process can take 12 to 14 hours, so drivers, walkers and monitors work in shifts, staying in close communication with the certified test conductor who oversees the move from inside the transporter.

Ed Griffith, USA mechanical lead for the group, said it's important to pay attention and stay alert while walking alongside the transporter.

The crawler's unique leveling system comes into play as the vehicle is driven up the hill to the launch pad at a reduced speed of about a third of a mile per hour. Griffith said excitement is high as the crawler closes in on the pad.

"Sometimes people don't realize the extent of what we do here," Griffith said. "We have some of the most talented people at Kennedy Space Center. They do great work."

"The things we're doing now are more than day-to-day operations; we're planning for five years from now. Thoughts of going back to the moon keep me going"

Ray Trapp,
USA manager
of the Crawler
Transporter Group

The group said they've encountered hogs, snakes and birds along the crawlerway, as well as an occasional alligator. Vibrations from the crawler cause insects to come up from between the gravel, attracting egrets to the food source.

The transporter group also manages the orbiter transporter and the Solid Rocket Motor transporter.

Trapp said the crawler transporters will be used for the Constellation Program, as well as the solid rocket motor transporters to transport Solid Rocket Booster segments.

"Everyday is an opportunity," Trapp said. "The things we're doing now are more than day-to-day operations; we're planning for five years from now. Thoughts of going back to the moon keep me going."

John F. Kennedy Space Center

Spaceport News

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