



countdown

February 19, 2009

Vol. 14, No. 13

Shuttles in various stages of processing, prep for launch

◆ **Shuttle Update:** On **Discovery**, work in progress at the launch pad includes launch preparations and aft closeout.

On **Atlantis**, work scheduled includes airlock closeout, IMU calibration and window carrier panel installations.

Endeavour's work in progress includes inspections, ODS system checkout and thermal protection system processing.

◆ **ELV Update:** The launch of NASA's Orbiting Carbon Observatory, or OCO, aboard a Taurus XL rocket is scheduled for Tuesday. Liftoff from Space Launch Complex 576-E at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., is set for 4:51:30 a.m. EST during a four-and-a-half-minute launch window. The spacecraft's final polar orbit will be 438 miles.

OCO is NASA's first spacecraft dedicated to studying atmospheric carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide is the leading human-produced greenhouse gas driving changes in Earth's climate. OCO will provide the first complete picture of human and natural carbon dioxide sources as well as their "sinks," the places where carbon dioxide is pulled out of the atmosphere and stored. It will map the global geographic distribution of these sources and sinks and study their changes over time.

The new observatory will dramatically improve global carbon dioxide data, collecting about eight million precise measurements every 16 days for at least two years.

On Monday, a prelaunch news conference will be held at noon EST. The pre-

launch news conference, as well as day's coverage of the launch will be carried live on NASA TV "Public Channel" (Channel 101).

■ **NASA Update** — NASA will hold a televised media briefing at 1 p.m. today to discuss the upcoming Kepler mission. Kepler is the first spacecraft with the ability to find Earth-size planets orbiting stars like our sun in a zone where liquid water could exist. Kepler is scheduled to launch March 5 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida. Participants are: Jon Morse, director of the Astrophysics Division at NASA Headquarters; William Borucki, principal investigator for Kepler science at NASA's Ames Research Center in California; Jim Fanson, Kepler project manager at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California; and Debra Fischer, professor of Astronomy at San Francisco State University.

■ **University of Florida OEM Program Upcoming Open House** — UF offers an engineering management master's degree program in an outreach format for full-time working professionals. Students meet only one weekend per month for 20 months, taking five engineering and five business courses. Classes will begin in August and will meet in Orlando. The program awards a master's degree in industrial & systems engineering (engineering management track). UF faculty travel from the Gainesville campus to teach.

For many students, OEM is a solution to the problem of whether to get a technical master's degree or an M.B.A. Students who want to get both degrees

Orbiting Carbon Observatory to launch Tuesday at 4:51 a.m.

can do so by taking advantage of a concurrent degree option that requires only 12 additional months of study (32 months total). Interested individuals are invited to learn more by attending an open house session Wednesday from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Hilton Melbourne Rialto (200 Rialto Place in Melbourne).

Application deadlines for the program beginning in August: first round application deadline - March 16; second application deadline - May 29. For more information, contact Patsy Messinger at messinger@ise.ufl.edu or 800-321-0199; or visit the OEM Web site: www.ise.ufl.edu/oemp.

■ **KARS Park Reservations** — Effective immediately, all KARS Park reservations are to be made to Kristina Bumgarner in the HQ Building/Room 1201. Call 867-2632 or fax: 867-9037.

■ **Did You Know?** National Engineers Week was created in 1951 by the National Society of Professional Engineers and coincides with Presidents' Day. This is no coincidence because George Washington, the first president of the United States, was a land surveyor and engineer.

Countdown is published every Tuesday & Thursday for NASA KSC employees. Deadlines are 9 a.m. Mondays & Wednesdays. E-mail news to anita.l.barrett@nasa.gov. For questions or information, e-mail or call 867-2815. You can also find PDF editions of *Countdown* on the Web at: http://www.nasa.gov/centers/kennedy/news/countdown/countdown_toc.html.