



StenniSphere

NASA Stennis Space Center Visitor Center



An aerial view of StenniSphere includes outdoor exhibits of the 14,000-square-foot visitor center at NASA John C. Stennis Space Center.

StenniSphere, the visitor center at NASA's John C. Stennis Space Center, features adventures in space exploration through 14,000 square feet of informative displays and exhibits from NASA, the Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command and other on-site agencies.

Visitors to StenniSphere board shuttles for a 25-minute narrated tour, beginning at the Launch Pad tour stop at the Hancock County Welcome Center located at Interstate 10 Exit 2 in south Mississippi. On display at the Launch Pad is a 30-foot-tall Lunar Lander that was used as a trainer by Apollo astronauts for their moon mission, complete with Apollo 13 astronaut and Mississippi native Fred Haise's boot prints and autograph at its base. Tours proceed to the site of America's largest rocket engine test complex, where visitors get an up-close view of the massive test stands and often experience the shake, rattle and roar of a rocket engine as it is being tested.

Captured on video at StenniSphere's museum is Stennis Space Center's role in the nation's space exploration goals announced by President George W. Bush in January 2004. NASA plans to take humans back to the moon, and possibly beyond. In the museum's lobby is an exhibit that highlights the career of the center's namesake, the late Mississippi Sen. John C. Stennis.

Exhibits

- Visualization Laboratory – StenniSphere's newest exhibit allows visitors to "experience" how Hurricane Katrina's storm surge flooded the Gulf Coast
- Moon Rock – collected by the Apollo 15 crew in August 1971, it is estimated to be more than 3 billion years old
- Apollo 4 Command Module – unmanned module was launched Nov. 9, 1967, to test the thermal protection system during re-entry
- Test Control Center – "test" a space shuttle main engine and "launch" a rocket in a mock-up of a Stennis Space Center test control center
- Space Shuttle Cockpit – help the computerized shuttle crew land the space shuttle
- International Space Station – full-scale mock-up offers a look at the habitation and laboratory module
- Swamp to Space – history of the center and information on the local environment is presented
- Evolution of Space Flight – pictorial history highlights America's space program
- Needlepoint Mission Patches – display features replicas of NASA

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mission patches hand-stitched by members of the American Needlepoint Guild

- The Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command – exhibit offers a weather center, a representation of the ocean floor and information about Earth’s oceans
- Caring for the Gulf Together – shows how Stennis resident agencies support preservation of the Gulf of Mexico
- NASA’s Technology: an Investment in America’s Future – reviews how space exploration has led to technological advances that improve everyday life
- Touching Tomorrow ... Today – NASA’s education exhibit highlights the importance of sharing tomorrow’s vision with today’s youths and educators

Outdoor Exhibits

- Space shuttle main engine
- Learjet Model 28 airplane equipped with remote sensors that gather detailed images of the Earth
- Full-scale Nomad buoy from the National Data Buoy Center representing the automated observing systems that measure weather and ocean conditions
- Scale model of the Saturn V rocket that took America’s astronauts to the moon
- F-1 engine that powered the first stage of the Saturn V rocket



A spacesuit display is among the many hands-on exhibits and activities adults and children enjoy at StenniSphere.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

John C. Stennis Space Center

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- Solid Rocket Booster that helps power the space shuttle into orbit
- A full-size Jupiter-C rocket, the kind that put the first U.S. satellite into orbit

Programs

At the museum, space-themed videos play throughout the day. Keep up with the latest scientific discoveries with “Science Bulletins,” broadcast by the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Experiments on how the environment of space affects the human body are conducted live at the new “Experimentation Station.”

Astro Camp

Inspire a future astronaut, engineer or scientist at Stennis Space Center’s Astro Camp. Weeklong day camps are held each summer for children ages 7-9, 10-12 and 13-15. One-day Astro Camp Saturday missions are held during the school year for ages 7-15. For dates, costs and other details, call 1-800-237-1821 (Option 4) or visit <http://www1.ssc.nasa.gov/public/visitors/>.

Additional Features

The RocKeTeria, a space-themed 1960s-style restaurant, offers a full menu of local favorites such as gumbo and po-boys. The Space Odyssey Gift Shop offers the “right stuff” for souvenirs or gifts.

Time and Location

StenniSphere conducts tours from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, except major holidays, with the last tour leaving the Launch Pad at 2 p.m. Group tours may be booked to visit Tuesday through Saturday. (To make reservations, call 1-800-237-1821.) Free tours begin at the Launch Pad tour stop at the Hancock County Welcome Center at Interstate 10 Exit 2, just 45 miles east of New Orleans and 45 minutes from Gulfport. (Visitors 18 and older must present a valid identification with photograph, such as a driver’s license or passport.)

For more information or to make reservations for groups, call StenniSphere at (228) 688-2370 or (800) 237-1821 (Option 1) in Mississippi and Louisiana, or visit: <http://www1.ssc.nasa.gov/public/visitors/>.