

Administrator's Launch Day Message

This afternoon, the eyes of the world will be on NASA and our effort to launch the Space Shuttle Discovery and its brave crew. The launch of STS-114 will culminate two and a half years of dedicated work to make the Space Shuttle program, and NASA as a whole, stronger and safer. I want to thank each and every member of the NASA team for your hard work and commitment to excellence.

A successful Shuttle flight will represent a major step toward our nation's ambitious Vision for Space Exploration. The flight of Discovery to the International Space Station will demonstrate the frontier spirit that drives us all -- the desire to explore, discover, and understand the universe we live in, and to settle new territory when it becomes possible to do so.

We approach this launch with a better understanding of the risks inherent to space flight. On this eventful day, we must recognize the legacy of the heroic astronauts who have brought us to this point. Among these great pioneers, the Apollo 1, Challenger and Columbia astronauts, and many other fallen heroes, are very much on our minds. We will never forget their contributions to the conquest of space.

Our crew is ready to go. Commander Eileen Collins, pilot James Kelly, and mission specialists Charlie Camarda, Wendy Lawrence, Soichi Noguchi, Stephen Robinson, and Andy Thomas are eager to test and validate new hardware and safety procedures for the Shuttle and deliver vital supplies and equipment to the International Space Station. On behalf of the entire NASA team, I am humbled to express a thought that unites the hearts of billions of people around the world: Godspeed Discovery.

Mike