National Aeronautics and Space Administration

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The greatest adventures always begin with a small step. Whether it was sailing on open seas in search of new worlds, moving west and exploring new frontiers, or lifting our eyes higher and imagining what it would be like to visit our nearest neighbor in the sky, those journeys began with a small, simple step. Those steps led to giant leaps that changed history, expanded our understanding of the world and pushed the boundaries of possibility.

From 1969 to 1972, 12 humans landed on the moon and explored its surface. Since that time, the space shuttle and the International Space Station have taught us how to live and work in space. Our ability to operate in such a challenging environment has expanded, and with the lessons learned to take us even further, we once again lift our sights to the moon.

Why go back? NASA’s Constellation Program, which is developing the Orion spacecraft, the Altair lunar lander and the Ares rockets, will take humans to the moon for the first time in 50 years, but this time we will stay. We will build a lunar outpost and will live and work on the moon’s surface. The moon still has many scientific mysteries to reveal to us, and it will teach us what we need to know for our next giant leap: putting human footprints on Mars and exploring even farther into the solar system.

This new journey has begun, and work is under way across the United States to build the spacecraft and technologies that will take us on that journey. We invite you to explore with us as we work to take these first steps that will lead to our next giant leap.

** Constellation  
**America’s New Spaceships **

**Ares I**  
**Crew Launch Vehicle**  
Ares I will launch the Orion crew exploration vehicle into orbit to rendezvous and dock with the International Space Station or the Altair lunar lander. The rocket has a single five-segment solid rocket booster and combines propulsion technology from both the space shuttle’s solid rocket booster and Apollo-era engines.

**Ares V**  
**Cargo Launch Vehicle**  
The Ares V will launch the Altair lander and the Earth departure stage to orbit for missions to the moon. It will be the largest rocket ever built and will stand taller than the Saturn V rocket from the Apollo program.

**Orion**  
**Crew Exploration Vehicle**  
The Orion crew exploration vehicle will succeed the shuttle as NASA’s primary vehicle for human space exploration. It is more than twice the size of an Apollo capsule and can carry four to six people to the space station, moon and beyond.

**Altair**  
**Lunar Lander**  
The Altair lunar lander will carry four astronauts to the surface of the moon. It will be launched separately from Orion and the two will dock together in low-Earth orbit. Altair will provide life support and a base for the crew while on the lunar surface for up to seven days and can also be flown unmanned for cargo missions.