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Boeing and the U.S. Air Force today conducted a successful first flight test of the X-40A technology demonstrator at Holloman Air Force Base in southern New Mexico. The X-40A is the Phase 1 flight test article of the Space Maneuver Vehicle (SMV).

The Boeing Company, under a contract with Air Force Research Laboratory, Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., designed and built the 90 percent scale reusable experimental space vehicle in the company Seal Beach, Calif. facility. The SMV flight test vehicle has a fuselage length of 22 feet, a wing span of 12 feet and weighs about 2,600 pounds.

"I am very pleased with the results of this flight test," said John Fuller, Boeing Phantom Works SMV project manager. "It is a significant step in the development phase. We wanted to validate low-speed handling qualities and demonstrate autonomous approach and landing capability. We did that today. Our next step will be to demonstrate the vehicle, capabilities both in the atmosphere and space."

The uniquely shaped vehicle is an innovative approach to fulfilling an Air Force need for a new generation of small and reusable, highly maneuverable space vehicles to perform a variety of tasks such as satellite deployments, surveillance and logistics missions.

The Space Maneuver Vehicle uses state-of-the-art subsystem components and technology packaged for aircraft-like operability. It is designed for quick turnaround -- 72 hours or less between missions -- and it can remain on station for up to one year, as required.

Boeing Phantom Works is developing the SMV project under the direction of the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory -- Military Spaceplane Technology program at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M. and the Air Vehicle Directorate at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Phantom Works is a Research & Development unit of The Boeing Company. It specializes in providing innovative and affordable solutions to aerospace systems.

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