No "2K" Problem With This Team: Boeing and NASA Conduct 2,000th Space Shuttle Main Engine Test at Stennis Space Center

The millennium came early for The Boeing Company and their NASA rocket engine test teammates at the John C. Stennis Space Center (SSC) in south Mississippi. The 2,000th single engine test of the Space Shuttle Main Engine (SSME) propulsion system was conducted at the A-2 test stand as Flight Engine #2049 was hot-fired for 520 seconds with no anomalies. All systems performing as expected.

"This is a remarkable accomplishment and is a tribute to every member of the NASA and Boeing test team at Stennis," said John Plowden, vice president and program manager for the Space Shuttle Main Engine at Boeing. "It might seem that after 2,000 tests that it has become routine, but this team treats each test as if it was the first and most important. With every test we also further enhance the safety, reliability and impressive record of success for this program."

With completion of the 2,000th test, single engines of the three-engine SSME propulsion system have been hot-fired on the test stand for a total of 656,562 seconds. In flight, each engine fires for 520 seconds; therefore, SSME's have been tested for the equivalent of 420 Space Shuttle flights. By contrast, the shuttle program will not complete its 100th flight until December 1999 when STS-100 delivers a payload of hardware for the construction of the International Space Station.

The SSME, the only reusable liquid-fueled rocket engine in the world, was developed and manufactured by the Rocketdyne Propulsion & Power segment of Boeing in Canoga Park, Calif. The SSME has been tested at SSC since May 19, 1975. In the coming months, test engineers at SSC will also be testing the XRS-2200 linear aerospike engine for the X-33 reusable launch vehicle also being developed by Boeing at Rocketdyne.

"The experience we've acquired working as a team at Stennis through the SSME program will add tremendous value as we begin preparations for testing these next-generation reusable rocket engines," said Dave Geiger, Director of SSC Test Operations for Boeing.

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For further information:
Dan Beck
(818) 586-4572