Boeing To Share Space Shuttle Vision At Development Conference

Prudent investments in America's reusable Space Shuttle fleet are essential if the nation is to maintain safe, reliable and affordable human access to space and fulfill its human spaceflight objectives in the early 21st century.

That is the message officials from throughout Boeing-the company that designed and built the capable and versatile Shuttle orbiter and its main engines--will be driving home when they join other experts from industry, academia and government to discuss the future of the world's most reliable and only operational reusable launch vehicle at a three-day Shuttle Development Conference kicking off tonight at NASA's Ames Research Center. The conference is sponsored by Shuttle prime contractor United Space Alliance (USA) and hosted by NASA.

Rick Stephens, Boeing Reusable Space Systems vice president and general manager, calls the conference a vital step in focusing America's attention on ensuring that this unique national asset continues to provide safe and reliable service to the human spaceflight program and that our nation capitalizes upon the tremendous opportunities and potential inherent in continuing to evolve the fleet.

"While the Shuttle has been flying for nearly 20 years, in many ways it remains a young system," Stephens said. "Continuous integration of state-of-the-art technologies has improved safety, reliability and performance; reduced turnaround time; eliminated obsolescence and cut operations costs. NASA, USA and their industry partners have made impressive strides in each of these areas in recent years.

"By bringing together the best and brightest minds in government, industry and academia and challenging them to think creatively, the stage is being set for inspiring development of breakthrough technologies that will benefit not just Shuttle, but all future reusable launch vehicles," Stephens said. "The Boeing Company looks forward to playing a significant role in this process."

Boeing subsystem and advanced technology experts feature prominently in the conference agenda. On Thursday, July 29, Stephens will participate in a panel discussion on "The Space Shuttle of the 21st Century," while Brewster Shaw, Boeing International Space Station (ISS) vice president and general manager, will speak on the key role Shuttle plays in supporting the ISS program. Boeing technical presentations that afternoon will include future payload-processing concepts, a non-toxic orbital maneuvering system/reaction control system, main propulsion system automated operations, advanced engine technology, Ku-band phased array antennas and Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation for Shuttle.

On Friday, July 30, Stephens will discuss orbital transfer vehicles as part of a presentation on "Emerging Space Shuttle Missions." Among the topics of Friday's technical presentations will be: reusable liquid first-stage engines for the Shuttle; application of commercial and military technology to next-generation Shuttle cockpit displays; electric auxiliary power units; electromechanical actuation technology; and the Boeing approach to thermal protection system upgrades.

An exhibit of Boeing contributions to and future concepts for the Shuttle will be open to the public as part of NASA Ames Research Center's Space and Education Day on Saturday, July 31, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Highlights will include a live Shuttle glass cockpit simulator, a full-sized Space Shuttle Main Engine, new technologies for enhancing safety through reconfigurable flight control and demonstrations of applications of electric vehicle technologies to the Shuttle.

Boeing is under contract to USA for Space Shuttle orbiter production, maintenance, modifications, operations, ongoing engineering support and overall Shuttle system and payload integration services, with additional responsibility for launch and mission support. Boeing also builds, tests and performs flight processing for the Space Shuttle Main Engines--the world's only reusable liquid-fueled large rocket engines--and prepares all Shuttle payloads for installation into the orbiters.

Media interested in attending this event should contact USA's Jack King at (407) 861-4358 for registration information. Additional information may be found at www.futureshuttle.com.

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