Launch of NASA's Mars Missions Earns Honors for Boeing Delta Team

Three consecutive Mars missions, all launched aboard Delta rockets, on time and within a four-month period, has garnered The Boeing Company a NASA Public Service Group Achievement Award.

Kristen Walsh, Delta program manager, accepted the award on behalf of Boeing during a recent ceremony at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif. All three spacecraft launched by Boeing were manufactured and managed by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the lead U.S. center for robotic exploration of the solar system, which is managed for NASA by the California Institute of Technology.

A Boeing Delta II launched the Deep Space 1 spacecraft in October 1998. In December 1998, the company launched the Mars Climate Orbiter, slated to orbit the Red Planet late this year. Its companion spacecraft, Mars Polar Lander, along with the Deep Space 2 microprobes, was launched in January 1999. Both Mars Polar Lander and Deep Space 2 will travel 11 months to land on an uncharted area near the south pole of Mars.

This is not the first time the Delta team has been honored for its work for NASA. Earlier this year, the team received a Public Service medal for outstanding management of Delta support of critical NASA missions, and last year the Huntington Beach Expendable Launch Services site was awarded NASA's Public Service Group Achievement Award for outstanding support. Two former Boeing Delta employees also received NASA Public Service Medals at that time.

The Delta team has launched three NASA spacecraft this year in addition to Mars Polar Lander: STARDUST, Far Ultraviolet Spectroscopic Explorer (FUSE), and LANDSAT-7. Boeing also launched two NASA-sponsored spacecraft, the Ørsted satellite for Denmark and the SUNSAT micro-satellite for South Africa, aboard a Delta II in February along with the ARGOS spacecraft for the U.S. Air Force.

The Delta program has launched 81 scientific and technology missions since 1961, boasting a better than 98 percent success rate.

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