Boeing Dedicates Rocket Facility at Decatur and Unveils First Delta IV Common Booster Core

Boeing employees at the Delta rocket factory here have completed the assembly of the first Delta IV common booster core (CBC), the largest element of the newest Boeing rocket.

Gov. Don Siegelman and Alabama Rep. Bud Cramer, who helped to make the partnership between Boeing and the North Alabama community a success, called this a win-win situation. Both spoke at the dedication ceremony held Friday morning after a special breakfast commemorating the partnership between Boeing, the U.S. Air Force, and federal, state, and local governments that developed this state-of-the-art launch vehicle factory.

"Alabama can proudly lay claim to the creation of the Saturn V booster that lifted man to the moon, the Lunar Rover that helped America's astronauts explore the moon's surface, the International Space Station that will open new scientific horizons for all mankind, and Boeing's leading role in our national missile defense as the primary contractor for the country's missile defense program," Siegelman said.

"Alabama's place in the history of our nation's space program is firmly established, and today we continue the tradition as Boeing and Alabama partner once again, giving the world the space launch vehicle of the 21st century -- the Delta IV rocket," the governor said.

Cramer also commended the partnership and the Delta program. "The Delta IV plant is playing a central role in ensuring our nation's access to space," he said. "With Boeing's ingenuity and North Alabama's hard work, we are committed to this task. The Decatur plant is a success story of local, state, and federal government coming together for the benefit of everyone involved."

Representatives of Boeing, the U.S. Air Force, NASA, the National Reconnaissance Office, and elected officials participated in the ceremony. Speakers included Siegelman; Cramer; Gale Schluter, vice president and general manager of Boeing Expendable Launch Systems; Col. Robert Saxer of the Air Force EELV program; Dan Collins, Boeing vice president, EELV and Delta IV programs; and Scott Strode, general manager of the Boeing Decatur facility.

"Completion of the CBC represents a major milestone in preparation for the first Delta IV launch next year," said Gale Schluter, vice president and general manager of Boeing Expendable Launch Systems. "This accomplishment belongs to the employees of Decatur and reflects the commitment by Boeing to making Delta IV the most cost effective, reliable launch vehicle family available anywhere in the world."

"Partnerships made this factory and this achievement possible, and I am extremely pleased to recognize the following for their contribution to this success, the state of Alabama, Morgan County, the cities of Trinity and Decatur, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Alabama Industrial Training Agency, the Alabama State Employment Service and Calhoun Community College," Schluter said.

The CBC, which includes the first-stage fuel tanks and main engine, was unveiled to conclude the ceremony. It will now travel to Stennis Space Center, Miss., for static fire testing.

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Boeing Delta Web Site

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