Boeing Partners with NASA to Chase Comets

Scientists believe comets may have brought the building blocks of life to Earth 3.8 billion years ago. To further study the comets' behavior and evolution, Boeing [NYSE:BA] will launch NASA's Comet Nucleus Tour (CONTOUR) spacecraft from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., on July 1.

At approximately 2:56 a.m. EDT, a Boeing Delta II rocket will blast off from Launch Pad A of Space Launch Complex 17 to send CONTOUR safely on its scientific pursuit of at least two comets.

"To expertly launch the Delta II and deploy the multi-million dollar CONTOUR probe on a precise trajectory in space requires tremendous know-how and a commitment to success," said Kris Walsh, Boeing Director of NASA Expendable Launch programs. "This is the driving force behind more than 190 successful Delta missions for NASA, and the driving force behind the CONTOUR launch."

For this mission, Boeing will use the 7425 configuration of the Delta II, which features four strap-on solid rocket motors and a third stage to boost CONTOUR into its proper trajectory. After the rocket deploys CONTOUR, the NASA spacecraft will embark on its mission, ultimately flying within 100 kilometers of the Enocke and Schwassman-Wachmann 3 comets to study the nucleus of each celestial body.

"A great teaming effort between NASA, the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, who designed and managed the mission, and Boeing has made the integration and processing of the CONTOUR spacecraft exceptional," said Cheryl Malloy, NASA's mission integration manager for CONTOUR. "We're ready for a first-class launch so the exploration and learning can begin."

The Boeing Delta II holds a 98 percent success rate and is dubbed the "workhorse of the industry."

Boeing Space and Communications (S&C), headquartered in Seal Beach, Calif., is the world's largest space and communications company. A unit of The Boeing Company, S&C provides integrated solutions in launch services, human space flight and exploration, missile defense, and information and communications. It is NASA's largest contractor; a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; and a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. The global enterprise has customers worldwide and manufacturing operations throughout the United States and Australia.
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