Boeing Submits Proposal for Altair Lunar Lander Study Contract

HOUSTON, Feb. 27, 2009 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA], through its Space Exploration division, submitted a proposal to NASA today for Altair lunar lander design support. NASA is expected to award multiple contracts this spring.

The lunar lander, part of NASA's Constellation program, will launch aboard the Ares V heavy-lift rocket and provide astronauts with life support and a base for exploration missions. Altair will also return the crew to the Orion spacecraft that will transport the astronauts back to Earth.

The Altair Conceptual Design Contract calls for NASA-directed engineering tasks to support evaluation of conceptual designs, maturation of the vehicle design, and preparation of products for system-requirements and system-definition reviews.

"Boeing is uniquely positioned to provide great design support now, as well as to support Altair development, test and evaluation when the time comes," said Keith Reiley, lunar lander project manager for Boeing. "Our ability to transition a skilled space shuttle work force ensures we can distribute the necessary expertise where it is needed as NASA transitions from the shuttle program to Constellation. We plan to support NASA with a local core team, enterprisewide specialty engineering experts, and a range of suppliers, including small and innovative high-tech companies."

The Altair lunar lander is envisioned with two stages: The descent stage will house the majority of the fuel, power supplies, and breathing oxygen for the crew. The ascent stage will house the astronauts, life-support equipment, and fuel for the ascent stage motor and steering rockets. The lander will carry a crew of four and be able to stay on the moon for up to six months. Altair will be capable of landing with 15 to 17 metric tons of dedicated cargo. The first crewed flight is scheduled for 2020.

NASA issued its request for proposal on Jan. 28 and will manage the Altair Conceptual Design Contract out of Johnson Space Center in Houston.

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