Boeing-built Space Launch System Core Stage Powers First Crewed Artemis Mission around the Moon

- **NASA's Artemis II mission paves way for future moon landing**
- **Future rockets currently in production**

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla., April 1, 2026 NASA's Space Launch System rocket, powered by the Boeing [NYSE: BA] - built core stage, lifted off at 6:35 p.m. ET. Eight and a half minutes into flight, the core stage successfully completed its mission and separated from the upper stage of the rocket, enabling NASA's Orion spacecraft, Integrity, to carry humankind around the moon.

NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch, as well as Canadian Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen, will fly Integrity on a 10-day lunar journey.

"We're honored to support NASA in restoring a capability vital to our nation's interests and future," said Steve Parker, president and chief executive officer of Boeing Defense, Space & Security. "Boeing and our Space Launch System partners are committed to NASA's mission to return astronauts to the moon, to establish a sustained lunar presence, and continue our exploration of deep space."

The core stage demonstrated several important operations, including the pre-launch fueling of both tanks, actuating the hydraulic system, igniting the engines, running thrust vector control programs in flight, depleting the fuel tanks, shutting down the engines, and conducting successful separation and disposal maneuvers.

"Today we witnessed our friends embark on a historic mission aboard our rocket," said John Shannon, vice president, Boeing's Exploration Systems business. "Our focus has been on prioritizing the quality of the vehicle and the safety of the crew as they begin their journey. This rocket is designed to withstand incredible forces while speeding through the atmosphere, and it performed exactly as intended. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated team and partners for their hard work in making this part of the mission a success."

The core stage of the rocket stands at 212 feet (almost 65 meters) and consists of a 196,000-gallon liquid oxygen tank and a 537,000-gallon liquid hydrogen tank. It also includes an intertank section that joins the two fuel reservoirs, a forward skirt that connects to the upper stage, and an engine section at the bottom with four RS-25 engines, which together produce 2.2 million pounds of thrust. A Boeing team manufactures the core stage at NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans, Louisiana, and uses components made by suppliers in more than 38 states.

The Boeing team is preparing the next core stages for the Artemis III to V missions, which are already in production at Michoud and Kennedy.

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