



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
OF FLORIDA'S SPACE COAST

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Orion test flight brings historic
economic development effort full circle**

EDC effort to secure assembly and checkout of Orion program began nearly a decade ago

Brevard County, Fla. (December 5, 2014) – Lockheed Martin has brought the United States one step closer to Mars. The Orion spacecraft successfully lifted off from Cape Canaveral Launch Pad 37 today on its maiden orbital test flight – Exploration Flight Test-1 (EFT-1) to prove out systems required for human, deep space exploration.

In 2006, after an aggressive economic development effort, Lockheed Martin selected the Space Coast as the site for not only launch, but also final assembly and checkout of Orion. It marked the first time the Space Coast would provide assembly and checkout services for a major human space launch program.

Landing the Orion program on the Space Coast has led to hundreds of new jobs, millions in economic impact, an enhancement to our broad network of suppliers, and utilization of existing facilities at KSC, like the Operations & Checkout Facility, now the Neil Armstrong Operations & Checkout Facility, that once supported aspects of the Shuttle program.

Lynda Weatherman, president and chief executive officer of the Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast looked to this day as an important moment for the community.

"A historic announcement has come full circle. Nearly a decade ago, a group of aerospace advocates joined the EDC in bringing the vision and reality of Orion to the Space Coast. While it was a turning point in utilizing the capabilities that exist here, winning the assembly and checkout of this program also simultaneously mitigated one of the worst economic challenges this community has ever faced with an impending Shuttle shutdown. We are especially pleased for Lockheed Martin, a company that put their confidence in our high tech workforce. Today, we proved together that the talent that exists here knows no limits."

NASA selected the Orion spacecraft as part of the agency's initial crew exploration vehicle (CEV) program to define, design, develop, and produce a vehicle designed for long-duration, human-rated deep space exploration. Orion will transport humans to interplanetary destinations beyond low Earth orbit, such as asteroids, the moon and eventually Mars, and return them safely back to Earth. Lockheed Martin is the prime contractor.

“This story would never have been written without the leadership and vision of the EDC, Space Florida, and our elected representatives in Tallahassee,” said Jules Schneider, Orion KSC operations senior manager, Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. “It was no small challenge to take on this monumental and breakthrough task of assembling America’s next generation, human exploration spacecraft. But hundreds of skilled engineers and technicians made it happen. Together – often working 3 shifts a day, 7 days a week – we took a basic spacecraft structure and assembled the vehicle that will launch us into a new era of deep space human exploration.”

During EFT-1, an uncrewed Orion vehicle orbited Earth twice, traveling approximately 3,600 miles above the Earth’s surface about 15 times farther than the International Space Station. The distance generates more than 80% of the return velocity (20,000 miles per hour) experienced during a reentry from the moon, which allows engineers to model expected reentries from future missions in deep space.

EFT-1 provided engineers with data about systems critical to crew safety such as heat shield performance, separation events, avionics and software performance, attitude control and guidance, parachute deployment, and recovery operations to validate designs of the spacecraft before it begins carrying humans to new destinations in deep space.

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About the Economic Development Commission of Florida’s Space Coast (EDC)

The Economic Development Commission of Florida’s Space Coast is dedicated to attracting new business and investment and expanding existing industry throughout the Space Coast, influencing change on government laws and regulations affecting economic development, promoting the Space Coast to encourage new investment, supporting efforts of Space Coast military installations, and relaying new programs and procedures to assist manufacturing and high tech companies. The EDC is a private, not-for-profit coalition whose stakeholders are business leaders committed to the economic growth and stability of Florida’s Space Coast. Visit www.SpaceCoastEDC.org.