

NEWS RELEASE



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PROUD DAY FOR SHUTTLE TEAM AS DISCOVERY ROLLS OUT

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, FL (April 7) -- Wednesday's rollout of the Space Shuttle Discovery marks the start of a historic new era in space exploration that sets the stage for the first step in the Nation's Vision for Space Exploration. This much anticipated event also serves as a tangible symbol of human accomplishment following more than two years of recovery, investigation, rigorous response and preparations for returning the Shuttle to safe flight.

"The return to safe flight will bring us all great satisfaction because we faced the adversity of the tragedy and recovery as a team, and together carried out a rigorous and responsible plan for getting back to the business of space flight," said United Space Alliance (USA) President and CEO, Mike McCulley. "Our NASA/Industry team is stronger and more capable as a result, and we can now focus our energy and talents on safe, successful missions."

As the Shuttle rolled slowly out the door of the Vehicle Assembly Building, many of the Space Shuttle employees who have played a role in the recovery and return to flight were on hand to watch the culmination of their dedication and hard work.

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“This was a great day for the entire Shuttle team, our nation and all who care about human space flight,” added Howard DeCastro, USA Vice President and Program Manager for Shuttle and International Space Station. That team, led by NASA, includes a 20,000-person work force made up of USA, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Rocketdyne, ATK-Thiokol, Hamilton Sundstrand and dozens of other companies who have worked together to return safely to flight.

“Included in that number,” continued DeCastro, “are the 10,000 USA employees who have played vital roles behind the scenes, working as a team, to get this nation back to space -- the people who searched the fields of East Texas after the accident, were instrumental in re-designing certain components of the Space Shuttle, make the tiles for the orbiter, build software, provide information management support, assemble and process the solid rocket boosters, train the shuttle crew, prepare the astronauts’ food and pack their clothing, plan the mission, get the launch pads ready, run the crawler transporters and prepare for the safe landing of the Shuttle.”

USA employees helped to develop the rendezvous pitch maneuver that the orbiter will perform at the International Space Station (ISS) so that station crew members can view the underside of the vehicle to look for damage. They helped to develop new imagery techniques to better capture photos and video of the External Tank after separation, and also defined launch parameters that meet new constraints to ensure proper lighting for capturing imagery. USA workers were part of the team that developed Shuttle crew procedures for inspecting and repairing thermal tile and reinforced

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carbon-carbon (RCC) on orbit. They also helped define the Shuttle and ISS robotic arm profiles used to support inspection and repair of the Thermal Protection System.

"This is truly a story of human perseverance and triumph, of the determination of the working women and men who have dedicated themselves to making it happen," said McCulley. "It is also a story of leadership and teamwork at all levels of the NASA/Industry team. One of the important results of that leadership and teamwork is an environment in which every individual is empowered and encouraged to express his or her views and concerns, and to call a 'time out' when they feel something is not right. We have had a number of situations in which that was done, and we have a safer vehicle and system because of it."

United Space Alliance, established in 1995, is a leader in space operations offering extensive experience in space launch and recovery operations; mission planning and control; flight hardware processing; space flight training; on-orbit assembly, payload deployment and servicing; rendezvous/proximity operations and docking; large-scale integration and sustaining engineering. United Space Alliance serves as NASA's prime contractor for the Space Shuttle and provides operations services for the International Space Station. United Space Alliance employs more than 10,000 people in Texas, Florida, and Alabama.

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