

# NASA's Budget Enables New Age of Exploration

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Statement by NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe about the Administration's fiscal year 2006 budget proposal and the Vision for Space Exploration.

"The fiscal 2006 NASA budget reaffirms the President's commitment to the Vision for Space Exploration and provides us the next step in implementing it. The exploration Vision provides a historic opportunity to focus NASA for the long term, and the process is well under way. We are transforming NASA and making great progress.

"We at NASA have embedded a safety culture that both embraces competition -- to bring out the best ideas from industry, universities and NASA centers -- and seeks innovation, to find the best solutions to technical and management challenges. We have enhanced our long-range planning to improve our decision making, and we have built a sound management foundation, based on the President's Management Agenda, to streamline our corporate structure and invigorate our field centers.

"The preparations for returning the Shuttle fleet to flight are continuing. On the International Space Station, we are in our fifth year of continuous presence on orbit. Our programs to explore the solar system continue to amaze us with the new and unexpected information returned from Mars, Saturn's moon Titan and other distant points in the universe.

"We are laying the groundwork for future exploration by beginning the design competition for the Crew Exploration Vehicle, which will have flight demonstrations in 2008. Building blocks are being placed to return

astronauts to the moon. We have awarded more than 100 contracts for exploration technologies, based on 600 proposals and 5000 letters of interest. The more than 17 billion hits to our NASA Web site are a testament to the intense, world-wide public interest in our activities.

"The Vision for Space Exploration remains an Administration priority even in this challenging budget environment. The continued priority for and support of exploration has enabled a gradually growing NASA budget over the next five years. The budget maintains resolute focus on exploration priorities and critical milestones, based on our science priorities.

"The budget supports critical national needs and revolutionary technologies. In our Aeronautics Mission Directorate, it protects aviation safety, security and airspace systems activities. It restructures vehicle systems work to focus on technology breakthroughs and near-term demonstrations.

"The President's fiscal 2006 budget request for the Science Mission Directorate builds on our recent scientific successes and projects a 23 percent increase in the total science budget by 2010. The budget proposal maintains investments in next-generation Earth-observing satellites to support our climate research efforts. In our education endeavors, the budget allows us to continue to inspire the next generation of explorers with programs such as explorer schools and scholarships for service.

For the Exploration Systems Mission Directorate, the request includes an 18 percent increase. The budget supports exploration systems' research and technology to enable designs for sustainable exploration; funding for Project Prometheus to test a nuclear reactor in 2008 and fly a demonstration mission within a decade; and more than \$800 million for human systems research and technology, directly linked to exploration

requirements for human missions to the moon and beyond.

"The budget proposal maintains the return-to-flight of the Space Shuttle fleet as our top priority, and it includes close to \$2 billion for the Space Station. This level of funding will enable NASA to meet obligations to international partners. NASA will also proceed with plans to retire the Shuttle in 2010, while ensuring safe missions for the life of the fleet.

"The fiscal 2006 budget assumes an ongoing effort to retool our institution based on best achieving our priorities for the Vision for Space Exploration. This will require adjustments to work-force skill distribution, physical capital, facilities and innovations in management structure. The end result will transform NASA field centers for the coming decade through improved agility and competitiveness.

"The sustainable implementation of the Vision will provide our legacy to future generations. With this budget, the torch is passed from the pioneers, who first took us to the moon, to their heirs, who will take us into deep space to stay."

Source: NASA

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