

# First Rocket Parts Of NASA's New Launch System Arrive In Florida

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Artist concept of Ares I-X rocket. Image: NASA

(PhysOrg.com) -- The first major flight hardware of the Ares I-X rocket has arrived in Florida to begin preparation for the inaugural test flight of the agency's next-generation launch system. The test flight is targeted for July 12, 2009.

The Ares I-X upper stage simulator traveled to Port Canaveral aboard the Delta Mariner, a ship that also transports the Delta IV rocket for United Launch Alliance. The journey began Oct. 22 on the Ohio River as the barge traveled toward the Mississippi River for its voyage to Port Canaveral. By Nov. 6, the flight hardware will have been moved off the barge into high bay 4 of the Vehicle Assembly Building at NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

The upper stage simulator consists of 11 individual components that were designed and manufactured during a two-year period at NASA's Glenn Research Center in Cleveland. The components represent the size, outer shape and weight of the second stage of the Ares I rocket, and will be integrated together in the Vehicle Assembly Building. The upper stage simulator eventually will be stacked atop the solid rocket booster segments of the Ares I-X rocket.

The Ares I-X test flight will provide NASA an early opportunity to test and prove hardware, facilities and ground operations associated with the Ares I crew launch vehicle. It also will allow NASA to gather critical data during ascent of the integrated Orion crew exploration vehicle and the Ares I rocket. The data will ensure the entire vehicle system is safe and fully operational before astronauts begin traveling to orbit.

Provided by NASA

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