

Atlantis Launch Countdown Begins Today

November 13 2009



The STS-129 crew pauses for a group portrait at the Shuttle Landing Facility at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. From left are Mission Specialist Leland Melvin; Pilot Barry E. Wilmore; Commander Charles O. Hobaugh; and Mission Specialists Randy Bresnik, Mike Foreman and Robert L. Satcher Jr. Photo credit: NASA/Kim Shiflett

(PhysOrg.com) -- At today's launch countdown status briefing held at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida, managers reported space shuttle Atlantis, its payload and crew are ready for launch at 2:28 p.m. EST on Monday.

NASA Test Director Charlie Blackwell-Thompson reported everything is progressing on schedule for Atlantis' 31st flight to deliver the crew, two Express Logistic Carriers and other necessary parts to the International Space Station.

"Our teams here at Kennedy [Space](#) Center, as well as all the NASA centers around the country, have worked very hard preparing this hardware for flight," said Blackwell-Thompson. "We're all looking forward to the mission that lies ahead."

Scott Higginbotham, the STS-129 payload manager, said the processing of the payload for this mission has been a difficult and challenging race for his team. "But we're smiling today," Higginbotham said. "Because we crossed the finish line and we survived." Final inspections were completed and the [payload](#) bay doors were closed for flight this morning.

Shuttle [Weather](#) Officer Kathy Winters reported weather is looking very good for [launch](#) day and for the loading of propellants into Atlantis' external fuel tank. At this time there's only a 10 percent chance of weather hindering a successful launch on Monday.

At 1 p.m. today, NASA's official launch countdown clock begins counting backward toward Monday's liftoff.

Provided by JPL/NASA ([news](#) : [web](#))

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