

# Falcon Heavy Rocket gets unveiled by SpaceX (Update)

April 5 2011, by John Messina

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This undated artist rendering provided by Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX), shows Space Exploration Technology's new rocket Falcon Heavy. On Tuesday, Elon Musk, CEO and chief rocket designer of (SpaceX) unveiled plans to launch the world's most powerful rocket since man went to the moon. (AP Photo/Space Exploration Technologies)

(PhysOrg.com) -- Private spaceflight company, SpaceX, unveiled their massive 22 story big Falcon Heavy rocket capable of carrying a cargo capacity of 117,000 pounds. The 27-engine Falcon Heavy is aimed to carry large commercial and government payloads into Earth orbit.

The 227 foot Falcon Heavy rocket is currently under construction at SpaceX's California HQ; the rocket dwarfs any of its rivals. The closest [NASA](#) heavy-lift rocket would be the [Saturn](#) V which launched the Apollo program.

In the private sector the closet rocket for comparison would be the United Launch Alliance's Delta IV, a 50,000-pound capacity booster that launches the Pentagon's heavy payloads.

According to SpaceX the Falcon Heavy offers a cost advantage over existing boosters. With a price range of \$80-125 million Falcon Heavy can deliver twice the payload into orbit. This compares to United Launch Alliance's Delta IV, a 50,000-pound capacity booster, costing \$275 million per launch.

SpaceX manages to keep their production cost down because they manufacture most of the parts in-house in the Hawthorne, CA complex that once assembled Boeing's 747 jumbo jets. The company also employs young engineers, in their early 30's that work for much less pay than they would make at larger aerospace companies.

SpaceX aims to launch their new heavy-lifter in a demo flight from California's Vandenberg AFB, northwest of Santa Barbara, by end of next year. The company's vision for the future is not only to launch satellites but also to carry robots and astronauts to Mars.

**More information:** [LA Times](#) and [SpaceX](#)

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