

# Sierra Nevada Corporation announces new space plans for NASA's Kennedy Space Center

January 24 2014

---

In the latest example of NASA Kennedy Space Center's transformation into a multi-user spaceport, Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC) of Louisville, Colo., announced Thursday steps it will take to prepare for a November 2016 orbital flight of its Dream Chaser spacecraft from Florida's Space Coast.

The announcement included the purchase of an Atlas V rocket from United Launch Alliance (ULA) for the launch, sharing the Operations and Checkout (O&C) development and testing facility with Lockheed Martin Space Systems, establishing an operation center at Kennedy Space Center and using the former Shuttle Landing Facility (SLF) runway at Kennedy. The steps are considered substantial for SNC and important to plans by NASA and Space Florida for Kennedy's new availability to both commercial and government customers.

"Today's announcement is the latest major milestone in the transformation of the Kennedy Space Center into a 21st century launch complex, serving both private sector and government users," said NASA Administrator Charles Bolden. "I salute Kennedy Space Center Director Bob Cabana for his leadership in transitioning the [space](#) coast for the future, and applaud Sierra Nevada Corporation on their decision to carry out their ground-breaking work at Kennedy."

SNC said it plans to work with ULA to launch the company's winged

Dream Chaser spacecraft into orbit from Space Launch Complex 41 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

"SNC is thrilled to confirm a launch date for our country's return to orbital human spaceflight and the restart of human spaceflight operations from Florida's Space Coast," said Mark Sirangelo, corporate vice president and head of SNC's Space Systems. "We could not have done this without the spirit and engagement from our national and state governments, the best aerospace companies in the industry, and several major universities, which all hail from over 30 states. Together these passionate people will return our astronauts to space on American spacecraft and rockets launched from America's space coast right here in Florida."

The Dream Chaser spacecraft is designed to carry crew and critical cargo to destinations, as well as perform servicing and science in low-Earth orbit. SNC said intends to complete Dream Chaser missions with a landing on the 3.5-mile runway at the SLF. Space Florida, which will operate the SLF in the future, will negotiate the terms and conditions for the runway's use with SNC.

"We are pleased to see continued growth of the State's investment into KSC facilities like the O&C," said Space Florida President Frank DiBello. "It is clear that the future of commercial space growth is happening right now in Florida and we couldn't be happier to work with companies like Sierra Nevada to realize their Florida-based expansion goals."

The company said it plans to prepare the Dream Chaser spacecraft in the high bay of the O&C building at Kennedy, with Lockheed Martin performing the work. The facility also is used for the development, assembly and testing of NASA's deep space Orion spacecraft. Dream Chaser testing will take place without disrupting Orion, NASA's flagship

human exploration vehicle.

"The O&C is a state-of-the-art facility that will greatly enhance Dream Chaser's future operations through an innovative co-use plan with Orion," said Vice President and General Manager, Civil Space, Lockheed Martin Space Systems, James H. Crocker. "The result will maximize efficiency for both the Dream Chaser spacecraft and Orion and will provide continuity for our highly trained, motivated and certified workforce."

SNC also plans to lease office space at Exploration Park, located just outside Kennedy's gates.

"We have been diligent in our efforts, and I consider this a strong vote of confidence from a company that expects to be a major force in the future of human spaceflight," said Bob Cabana, Kennedy center director. "Sierra Nevada Corporation will find in our workforce and facilities the same dynamic and professional people who have made successful missions from here for more than 50 years."

Cabana said SNC's involvement with the Florida spaceport shows the conversion to a 21st Century spaceport is succeeding, although work remains to keep the transformation on pace.

"We are honored that Sierra Nevada Corporation has reserved a proven Atlas V to launch its first flight test in 2016," said Michael Gass, United Launch Alliance president and CEO. "With 42 successful missions spanning a decade of operational service, the commercially-developed Atlas V is uniquely qualified to provide launch services for the Crew Transportation System. Because Atlas is already certified by NASA to fly the nation's most complex exploration missions, ULA is able to provide a wealth of flight data, design implementation, detailed system and sub-system analysis, qualification and certification documentation to

support the Atlas V for human spaceflight."

The Dream Chaser spacecraft is deep into development of flight hardware and specific plans ranging from ground support equipment to what to include in a mission operations center.

"I had the privilege of piloting and commanding five space shuttle flights as a NASA astronaut," said Steve Lindsey, former NASA astronaut and SNC's senior director and Dream Chaser program manager. "This included the last flight of Discovery which was processed, launched, and on March 9, 2011, made its final landing at the SLF after 39 flights and 148 million space miles. Mark, the entire SNC Dream Chaser team, and I look forward to seeing Dream Chaser continue this legacy from Discovery when it flies in 2016."

Provided by NASA

Citation: Sierra Nevada Corporation announces new space plans for NASA's Kennedy Space Center (2014, January 24) retrieved 24 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-01-sierra-nevada-corporation-space-nasa.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.