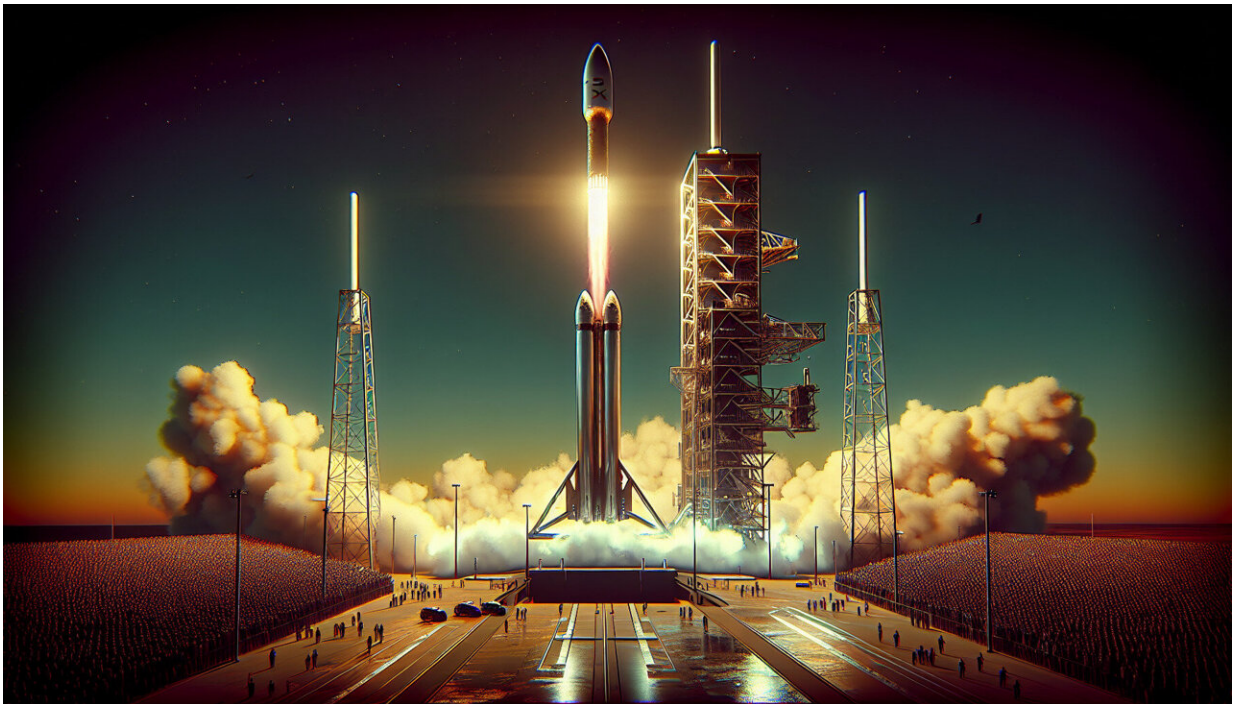


SpaceX launch this evening would mark 300th booster landing if successful

April 23 2024, by Richard Tribou, Orlando Sentinel



Credit: AI-generated image

SpaceX is set to send up the 30th launch on the Space Coast this year targeting an evening liftoff Tuesday that would see the 300th booster recovery if successful.

A Falcon 9 rocket carrying 23 of SpaceX's Starlink internet satellites is

aiming to launch at 6:17 p.m. at the opening of a four-hour window Tuesday that runs from 6:15-10:15 p.m. A backup opportunity falls from 5:50-9:50 p.m. Wednesday.

Space Launch Delta 45's weather squadron forecasts better than 95% chance for good conditions for both Tuesday and the Wednesday backup.

The first-stage booster will set a milestone for the company marking the 300th time a Falcon 9 or Falcon Heavy booster has made a recovery landing, and the 270th time SpaceX has reflown a booster.

This particular booster is flying for the ninth time including one [human spaceflight](#), Crew-6, and SpaceX will attempt its recovery landing downrange on the dronship Just Read the Instructions stationed in the Atlantic Ocean.

The company's first successful booster recovery came in December 2015, and it has not had a failed [booster](#) landing since February 2021. The current record holder for flights flew 11 days ago making its 20th trip off the [launch pad](#).

SpaceX has been responsible for all but two of the launches this year from either Kennedy Space Center or Cape Canaveral with United Launch Alliance having launched the other two.

SpaceX could knock out more launches before the end of the month putting the Space Coast on pace to hit more 90 by the end of the year, but the rate of launches by SpaceX is also set to pick up for the remainder of the year with some turnaround times at the Cape's SLC-40 coming in less than three days.

That could push the pace so the Space Coast could surpass 100 launches

before the end of the year, with the majority coming from SpaceX.

More launches from ULA are on tap as well, though, including the May 6 launch atop an Atlas V rocket of the Boeing CST-100 Starliner with a pair of NASA astronauts to the International Space Station. ULA is also preparing for the second launch ever of its new Vulcan Centaur rocket, which recently received its second Blue Origin BE-4 engine and is just waiting on the payload, Sierra Space's Dream Chaser spacecraft, to make its way to the Space Coast.

Blue Origin has its own rocket it wants to launch this year as well, with New Glenn making its debut as early as September, according to SLD 45's range manifest.

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