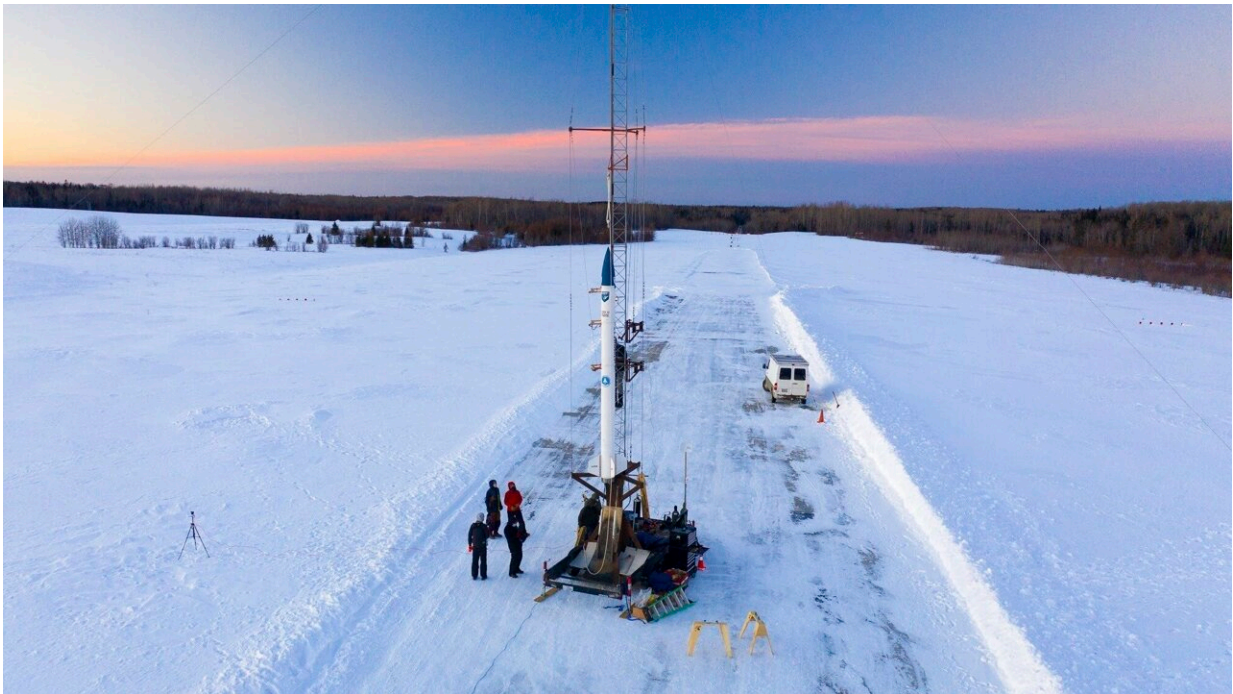


Maine company plans to launch small satellites starting in 2025

June 4 2024, by Patrick Whittle



BluShift Aerospace prepares a test launch, Jan. 31, 2021, at the former Loring Air Force Base in Limestone, Maine. Currently the company is working toward its next suborbital launch and plans to expand into the orbital and small satellite services markets in the future. Credit: Lindsay Becker/bluShift Aerospace via AP

Representatives for a Maine company that plans to send small satellites into space from the Northeast's most rural state said they will start

launches next year.

Brunswick-based bluShift Aerospace hopes to turn Maine into a hub for the launching of commercial nanosatellites and has been making progress toward that goal for more than three years. A successful recent round of fundraising means commercial suborbital launch is on track to start in 2025, company officials said Tuesday.

The small satellite market currently relies on large companies, [such as Elon Musk's SpaceX](#), for deployment of satellites, and that leads to long wait times, said bluShift CEO and founder Sascha Deri. Launching small satellites from Maine can change that, Deri said.

"We see an enormous need for dedicated, small-lift satellite deliveries to space," Deri said, adding that customers are "seeking rapid, affordable access to space and direct delivery to their desired orbit."

The company's progress on launching small satellites is happening during a time of tremendous growth in the industry, company representatives said.

The concept of small satellites was essentially an academic exercise two decades ago and the technology has since become one of the fastest growing in the satellite industry, bluShift representatives said. The worldwide market for a class of small satellites called CubeSats was valued at \$210 million in 2021 and is expected to be worth more than four times that by 2030, the company said.



Sascha Deri, CEO and Founder of bluShift Aerospace, stands with Stardust 1.0 commercial rocket, April 2021 at bluShift headquarters in Brunswick, Maine. The company hopes to begin commercial launches of small satellites next year. Credit: Lindsay Becker/bluShift Aerospace via AP

BluShift plans to use an existing spaceport for initial launches and begin using Maine's rural, remote Downeast coastline as a headquarters for launches as soon as 2026, company officials said. The company said it thinks the rural coast is a good location because it provides launch opportunities over the Atlantic Ocean directly into polar orbit with little interference.

The company launched a 20-foot (6-meter) [prototype rocket](#) to an altitude of more than 4,000 feet (1,219 meters) in its first test run in 2021. The rocket simulated a small payload by carrying stroopwafels, Dutch cookies.

BluShift also said Tuesday that Brady Brim-DeForest, managing partner at Late Stage Capital of Houston, will become chairman of the board of directors. Brim-DeForest said the company's use of nontoxic biofuel and reusable rockets will help with its mission of "democratizing access to orbit."

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