NASA shipper Orbital ATK launches space station supplies

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One of NASA's prime shippers, Orbital ATK, has launched a fresh load of supplies to the International Space Station.

The Antares rocket blasted off from Wallops Island, Virginia, before dawn Monday, treating early risers along the East Coast to a cosmic light show, at least where skies were clear. The 7,400-pound shipment—a third of it research—should reach the orbiting lab Thursday.

The Cygnus capsule holds a student cement-mixing experiment, as well as an atom-cooling chamber from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory that uses lasers to get temperatures colder than even space itself. There's also equipment for a spacewalk next month.

Named for the swan constellation, the Cygnus is making Orbital ATK's ninth contracted delivery for NASA. SpaceX is NASA's other supplier.

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