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Inside Wallops

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The Rocket Range on Wheels NASA Wallops Answers the Call

Most rocket launches are conducted at established launch facilities that are fully equipped with radars, control facilities and other support equipment. But what do you do if the range is not fully equipped or the mission needs to be conducted where there is no existing launch range?

For more than 30 years the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center's Wallops Flight Facility, has answered the call with its mobile range to support rocket launches around the world for government and commercial organizations.

Jack Vieira, Wallops range support manager, said "The Wallops mobile range capabilities are unique not only within NASA but throughout the world. We have available the needed tracking equipment for most any type of rocket launch. We have even supported the smaller suborbital rocket missions with launch rails and pads."

Wallops has provided its mobile range capabilities to support sounding rocket and orbital rocket launches at sites that include the Canary Islands, Puerto Rico, Australia, Greenland, Brazil, Peru and even an aircraft carrier off the coast of Ecuador.

The Wallops mobile range is in action again by supporting the late summer launch of the Lockheed Martin Athena 1 vehicle carrying NASA and Department of Defense satellites. The launch will be from the Kodiak Launch Complex (KLC) on Kodiak Island, Alaska.

For this mission, NASA Wallops will be providing an array of tracking equipment and support vans that will be located at Kodiak and the town of Cordova, on the Alaskan mainland just north of Kodiak Island. Wallops support will include range safety, radar tracking and telemetry.

Pat Ladner, Executive Director of the Alaska Aerospace Development Corporation (AADC), said "The Wallops range safety support has a reputation for being second to none. AADC is proud to have Wallops supporting the first orbital launch from the KLC."

Vieira said, "Planning and testing has been ongoing at Wallops for more than a year to support the Athena launch.

Testing of the equipment at Wallops has been intensive for the last five months."

At Kodiak, Wallops is providing an 8-foot diameter radar system, 10-foot and 18-foot diameter telemetry antennas and vans, a power van, and a Mobile Command Range System van. At Cordova, Wallops will provide an 11-foot diameter radar, a 27-foot diameter telemetry antenna and support van, a mobile command van, and a power van.

"In addition to the myriad of equipment, Wallops will be supplying 33 personnel to support the mission," said Vieira, a veteran of two mobile campaigns.

The equipment and Wallops personnel will arrive at their respective sites by mid-July to support the targeted August 31 launch.

Wallops Senior Manager Announces Retirement

Dr. Arnold Torres, senior manager at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center's Wallops Flight Facility, since January 1995, has announced that he will retire at the end of the year.

Torres said, "The end of this year will mark seven years since I became senior manager at Wallops and Director of Suborbital and Special Orbital Projects. Wallops has accomplished many wonderful things during this time, and I am proud to have been associated with the talented and dedicated men and women who made this possible."

"We will miss Arnold a great deal," said Goddard Director A. V. Diaz. "He's been a champion for the Wallops Flight Facility and a passionate advocate for the people there. His advice and counsel have been invaluable, and I know he will lend his personal knowledge and energy to finding a successor and ensure a smooth



Dr. Arnold Torres

Launch of Goes-M Weather Satellite Postponed

The launch of the GOES-M environmental satellite for NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) aboard a Lockheed Martin Atlas IIA rocket (AC-142) has been postponed one week to no earlier than July 22.

This new launch date is pending the repair and delivery of the Remote Control Unit, a portion of the launch vehicle guidance system on the Centaur upper stage. The launch window on July 22 is 3:01 - 4:25 a.m. EDT.

TSP Open Season

The current Thrift Saving Plan open season, in which employees may start, stop or change contribution amounts to the plan's funds ends July 31. The next open season will run November 15 thru January 31.

transition to a new director of Wallops."

During Torres' tenure, Wallops underwent many changes that increased its strategic value to NASA and the nation's aerospace industry. The facility began management of the Space Shuttle's small payloads Get-Away-Specials, Hitchhikers, and Space Experiment Modules; development of an Ultra-Long Duration Balloon for flights up to 100 days; commercialization of the NASA sounding rocket operations; and development of the Wallops Partnership, which includes NASA, NOAA, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority.

Torres said, "Over the next six months, as we finalize and begin the implementation of the Wallops Mission 2005, our strategic value to NASA and to the nation will become even stronger. I will leave here feeling good about the future of Wallops."

Torres received his Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of South Carolina. He joined NASA in 1978 as an atmospheric scientist. He has been recognized as having made pivotal contributions to science and in 1985 he was awarded the Goddard Space Flight Center Exceptional Achievement Award.

Torres and his wife, Linda, reside in Pocomoke City, Md.