

Press Release

DIRECT team to present at Augustine Commission Hearings

NASA Manager invites grass-roots volunteer team to present Launch Vehicle System proposal to Presidential Commission.

Cape Canaveral, FL, June 5, 2009:

After a three-year effort, a grass roots team proposing an alternative launch vehicle system will finally have the opportunity to present their case to the commission created by President Obama to evaluate NASA's existing and planned options for Human Space Flight Programs.

The all-volunteer group, consisting of nearly 80 NASA and space industry rocket scientists, engineers, managers, and enthusiasts from around the country, have been developing a Shuttle-derived alternative launch system architecture known as "Jupiter."

The group, known as "The DIRECT Team," has taken a previous NASA design, "The National Launch System" and improved it with existing components, creating a launch vehicle system designed to support both the International Space Station initially, and also NASA's Exploration missions to the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

The invitation to appear before the Augustine Commission was extended by Michael Hawes, NASA's Associate Administrator for Program Analysis and Evaluation. Mr. Hawes is also NASA's liaison to the commission.

"This is what our team has been working toward from day one," said DIRECT spokesman Ross Tierney. "We are eager to make our case and look forward to being fully considered by the commission."

The team contends that their launcher incurs less than half cost of the space agency's planned "Ares" vehicles, making use of existing components and developing only one launch vehicle system, rather than two dissimilar launch vehicles. The Jupiter design chooses to develop the launcher more "direct-ly" derived from existing Shuttle components, hence the name "DIRECT." By taking this approach, the team believes their launch system has the following benefits to the American Human Spaceflight Program:

1. It can be flying as much as 4 years sooner than NASA's currently planned vehicles.
2. It prevents the loss of 4,500 jobs caused by the retirement of the Space Shuttle.
3. It eliminates paying billions of dollars to the Russians to fly American astronauts to the ISS.
4. It reestablishes the United States as the Technological Leader of Human Spaceflight on Earth.
5. It does not require additional funding from Congress in these difficult economic times.
6. It follows the NASA Authorization Act of 2005 which mandates reuse of Shuttle Components.

Representatives from DIRECT will be presenting their proposal to the Augustine Committee in Washington, D. C. on Friday, June 17, 2009.

For more information about the DIRECT Team and their proposal:

www.directlauncher.com

For more information about the Review of U.S. Human Space Flight Plans Committee:

<http://www.nasa.gov/offices/hsf/home/index.html>

