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NASA Selects Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle Prime Contractor

NASA selected Thursday Lockheed Martin Corp., based in Bethesda, Md., as the prime contractor to design, develop, and build Orion, America's spacecraft for a new generation of explorers.

Orion will be capable of transporting four crewmembers for lunar missions and later supporting crew transfers for Mars missions. Orion could also carry up to six crew members to and from the International Space Station.

The first Orion launch with humans onboard is planned for no later than 2014, and for a human moon landing no later than 2020. Orion will form a key element of extending a sustained human presence beyond low-Earth orbit to advance commerce, science and national leadership.

The contract with Lockheed Martin is the conclusion of a two-phase selection process. NASA began working with the two contractor teams, Northrop Grumman/Boeing and Lockheed Martin, in July 2005 to perform concept refinement, trade studies, analysis of requirements and preliminary design options. Lockheed Martin will be responsible for the design, development, testing, and evaluation (DDT&E) of the new spacecraft.

Manufacturing and integration of the vehicle components will take place at contractor facilities across the country. Lockheed Martin will perform the majority of the Orion vehicle engineering work at NASA's Johnson Space Center, Houston, and complete final assembly of the vehicle at the Kennedy Space Center, Fla. All 10 NASA centers will provide technical and engineering support to the Orion project.

The contract is structured into separate schedules for DDT&E with options for production of additional spacecraft and sustaining engineering. During DDT&E, NASA will use an end-item cost-plus-award-fee incentive contract. This makes the award fee subject to final determination after the contractor has demonstrated that it meets the technical, cost, and schedule requirements of the contract.

DDT&E work is estimated to occur from Sept. 8, 2006, through Sept. 7, 2013. The estimated value is \$3.9 billion.

Production and sustaining engineering activities are contract options that will allow NASA to obtain additional vehicles as needed. Delivery orders over and above those in the DDT&E portion will specify the number of spacecraft to be produced and the schedule on which they should be delivered.

Post-development spacecraft delivery orders may begin as early as Sept. 8, 2009, through Sept. 7, 2019, if all options are exercised. The estimated value of these orders is negotiated based on future manifest requirements and knowledge gained through the DDT&E process and is estimated not to exceed \$3.5 billion.

Sustaining engineering work will be assigned through task orders. The work is expected to occur from Sept. 8, 2009, through Sept. 7, 2019, with an estimated value of \$750 million, if all options are exercised.

For information about Orion, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/orion>

For information about NASA and agency programs, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/home>

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