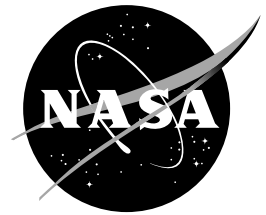


NASA Facts

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

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The Space Launch Initiative: *creating an affordable space frontier*

NASA's Space Launch Initiative is the key to opening the space frontier for continued scientific exploration and economic expansion – by making space flight safe and affordable for both the government and private industry.

The first step, identifying technologies needed to create a new, safe, cost-effective launch system, is complete. Next is technology development – a \$4.8 billion investment through 2006. Building a new spacecraft could begin the middle of this decade. The final step – launching – is expected early next decade.

The spacecraft will be a second generation reusable launch system. The first generation reusable launch vehicle is the Space Shuttle, which launches payloads at \$10,000 per pound. Cost per pound on a second generation vehicle could be around \$1,000 – an affordable, profit-making price for private companies.

The Space Launch Initiative also invests in NASA's special needs, such as developing technology and vehicles to transport crews and cargo to and from the International Space Station more cheaply than the Shuttle. Such an investment can save taxpayer dollars.

The Marshall Center is NASA's Lead Center for Space Transportation Systems Development, overseeing the Space Launch Initiative. Marshall's efforts are supported by Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, Calif.; Stennis Space Center in Bay St. Louis, Miss.; Kennedy Space Center, Fla.; Dryden Flight Research Center in Edwards, Calif.; Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas; Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va.; the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif.; Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio; and the Air Force Research Laboratory, which includes research and development facilities at nine United States Air Force bases nationwide.