Lori Garver, NASA Deputy Administrator: Today, NASA and Kennedy Space Center are again lifting our sights and lifting our spirits to new heights.

NARRATOR: The first Orion spacecraft destined for orbit arrived at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida to begin processing for a flight test in 2014. The flight test, called Exploration Flight Test-1 or EFT-1, will not carry any people into space during the mission.

Instead, it will be loaded with a wide variety of instruments to evaluate how it behaves during launch, in the vacuum of space and the through the searing heat of reentry.

Later Orion spacecraft will take astronauts far beyond Earth on missions to an asteroid, the moon and perhaps even Mars.

Senator Bill Nelson, Florida: Ladies and Gentlemen, we're going to Mars!

We know that the Orion capsule is a critical part of the system that is going to take us there.
And so, we're working on it.

NARRATOR: For now, though, all attention is focused on completing the assembly of this Orion.

The work will take place in the Operations and Checkout Building at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Refurbished extensively in 2006, the high bay at the O&C has been outfitted with large fixtures and tooling to turn the aluminum shell of Orion into a functioning spacecraft complete with avionics, instrumentation and the heat shield.

A Delta IV Heavy rocket from United Launch Alliance will lift the capsule into an orbit reaching 3,600 miles, about 15 times higher than the International Space Station.

The mission will last only a few hours, long enough to make two orbits before being sent plunging back into the atmosphere and parachuting safely into the ocean.