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00:00:01,760 --> 00:00:05,980

\h Narrator: Welcome to Kennedy NOW! A look at some of the recent accomplishments

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00:00:05,980 --> 00:00:12,800

\h and changes under way at America's premiere spaceport.

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00:00:12,800 --> 00:00:17,660

\h NASA Launch Services Program, based at Kennedy, is working toward the summer launch of

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00:00:17,660 --> 00:00:21,060

\h the agency's newest space-based observatory.

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00:00:21,060 --> 00:00:26,450

\h Called IRIS, the 7-foot-long spacecraft will use a spectrograph to see the way energy

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00:00:26,450 --> 00:00:31,450

\h moves through the outer layers of the sun and into its shining corona.

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00:00:31,450 --> 00:00:36,080

\h In late April the spacecraft arrived at Vandenberg Air Force Base in Calif.

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00:00:36,080 --> 00:00:42,820

\h where technicians and LSP managers began the final steps of processing it for launch in June.

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00:00:42,820 --> 00:00:47,740

\h IRIS will fly into space aboard a Pegasus rocket, which will be dropped from a converted

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00:00:47,740 --> 00:00:53,620

\h L-1011 airliner before igniting its engine to reach orbit.

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00:00:53,620 --> 00:00:57,850

\h Another target came into focus for Kennedy, and its unique work force, in April.

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00:00:57,850 --> 00:01:02,830

\h That's when NASA outlined an ambitious exploration mission aimed at sending astronauts

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00:01:02,830 --> 00:01:06,180

\h to sample an asteroid as it flies through space.

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00:01:06,180 --> 00:01:08,080

\h Dan Dumbacher, Deputy Assoc. Admin. for Exploration Systems Development: We are thrilled with this

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00:01:08,080 --> 00:01:12,420

\h we look forward to it, it will be a challenge, it will be complex.

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00:01:12,420 --> 00:01:20,640

\h But NASA is up to the challenge and the team that you see represented here is ready and willing to take

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00:01:20,640 --> 00:01:27,660

\h Narrator: The asteroid will be captured by a solar-electric-powered, un-crewed spacecraft and placed in

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00:01:27,660 --> 00:01:33,410

\h A human crew flying aboard an Orion spacecraft launched from Kennedy will visit the asteroid.

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00:01:33,410 --> 00:01:39,410

\h They'll take samples from it that researchers will use to further their studies of the space rocks.

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00:01:39,410 --> 00:01:44,070

\h The Orion flight, launching on a Space Launch System super-booster now under development,

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00:01:44,070 --> 00:01:47,010

\h could take place as soon as 2021.

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00:01:47,010 --> 00:01:52,060

\h The Orion design will be tested next year during an un-crewed mission using a spacecraft

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00:01:52,060 --> 00:01:56,550

\h now being assembled inside Kennedy's Operations & Checkout Building.

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00:01:56,550 --> 00:02:00,670

\h Bob Cabana, Kennedy Space Center Director: We've made tremendous progress in our transition to the

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00:02:00,670 --> 00:02:05,590

\h Narrator: The flight test will send the Orion spacecraft about 3,600 miles above Earth,

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00:02:05,590 --> 00:02:10,740

\h or some 15 times higher than the International Space Station. From that height,

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00:02:10,740 --> 00:02:17,950

\h it will plunge into the atmosphere at more than 20,000 mph to test the spacecraft's heat shield.

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00:02:17,950 --> 00:02:24,160

\h While the mission is a demanding test of the spacecraft, it also will provide proof of