



# Episode 10: Gateway to the Moon

May 2019

@NASAKennedy  
#NASARocketRanch

New episodes every month!

1

00:00:00,399 --> 00:00:06,850

NASA has been given its loftiest charge since the 1960s and KSC has a critical role...

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00:00:06,850 --> 00:00:10,769

We know we're standing on the shoulders of giants and it's pretty nostalgic and

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00:00:10,769 --> 00:00:11,849

pretty emotional.

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00:00:11,849 --> 00:00:13,540

Next, on the Rocket Ranch.

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00:00:16,900 --> 00:00:21,080

EGS Program Chief Engineer, verify no constraints to launch.

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00:00:21,080 --> 00:00:23,560

EGS Chief Engineer team has no constraints.

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00:00:23,560 --> 00:00:24,880

I copy that.

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00:00:24,880 --> 00:00:26,780

You are clear to launch.

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00:00:26,780 --> 00:00:34,020

Five, four, three, two, one, and lift-off.

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00:00:34,020 --> 00:00:35,940

All clear.

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00:00:35,980 --> 00:00:39,060

Now passing through max q, maximum dynamic pressure.

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00:00:39,060 --> 00:00:40,440

Welcome to space.

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00:00:42,780 --> 00:00:47,300

NASA's accelerating a human return to the Moon and will put the first woman, and the

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00:00:47,300 --> 00:00:51,020

next man, on the lunar South Pole by 2024.

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00:00:51,020 --> 00:00:56,040

The agency is going back to the Moon in two phases – the first is focused on speed.

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00:00:56,040 --> 00:01:00,690

Second, NASA will establish sustainable missions by 2028.

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00:01:00,690 --> 00:01:05,400

The Gateway will be the center of that exploration – serving as a home base in lunar orbit

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00:01:05,400 --> 00:01:08,980

for missions to the surface of the Moon and beyond.

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00:01:08,980 --> 00:01:15,440

The Gateway will be a collaboration with NASA, international partners and commercial companies.

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00:01:15,440 --> 00:01:19,940

Kennedy has been handed a piece of the puzzle and Mark Weise will leverage the expertise

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00:01:19,940 --> 00:01:23,690

already at the space center to lead the logistics team for Gateway.

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00:01:23,690 --> 00:01:28,690

I was able to catch up with Mark, but first, a disclaimer: while we're definitely headed

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00:01:28,690 --> 00:01:32,170

back to the Moon, we are still working out some of the details.

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00:01:32,170 --> 00:01:36,560

As you enjoy this podcast, keep in mind that plans and details are in flux and what was

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00:01:36,560 --> 00:01:41,710

accurate at time of recording may have changed since then—which is great because that just

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00:01:41,710 --> 00:01:43,720

gives us a reason to do a follow-up episode!

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00:01:43,720 --> 00:01:44,940

Now, Mark.

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00:01:44,940 --> 00:01:46,380

We love rockets down here.

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00:01:46,380 --> 00:01:51,120

And this is the "Rocket Ranch" podcast, so – should have anticipated that coming.

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00:01:51,120 --> 00:01:52,799

And his side-kick, Johnny Nguyen.

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00:01:52,799 --> 00:01:56,060

It feels like it's, like, project management 101.

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00:01:56,060 --> 00:01:58,520

Hoping they could teach me a thing or two about Gateway.

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00:01:58,520 --> 00:02:03,560

But first, I had some nagging questions about

our history with the moon.

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00:02:03,560 --> 00:02:06,600  
Astronaut Gene Cernan: Probably one of the most significant things we can think about

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00:02:06,600 --> 00:02:16,100  
when we think about Apollo, is that it has opened for us being the world a challenge

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00:02:16,100 --> 00:02:18,060  
of the future.

37  
00:02:18,060 --> 00:02:24,220  
The door is now cracked, but the promise of that future lies in the young people, not

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00:02:24,220 --> 00:02:28,380  
just in America, but the young people all over the world.

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00:02:28,380 --> 00:02:32,780  
All right, so, I am here now in the booth with Mark Wiese and Johnny Nguyen.

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00:02:32,781 --> 00:02:33,870  
Gentlemen, thanks for joining me.

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00:02:33,870 --> 00:02:34,870  
Thank you.

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00:02:34,870 --> 00:02:35,870  
Thanks for having us.

43  
00:02:35,870 --> 00:02:41,160  
So, I want to actually go way back for a second and ask the question, why did we stop flying

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00:02:41,160 --> 00:02:42,200

to the moon?

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00:02:42,200 --> 00:02:45,629

Because we're about to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first man walking on the

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00:02:45,629 --> 00:02:48,560

moon, and it's been a long time since we've been there.

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00:02:48,560 --> 00:02:53,930

So we're about to return to that kind of phase of exploration, but why stop?

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00:02:53,930 --> 00:02:57,989

I think the place our country was at back then, it just wasn't as urgent anymore.

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00:02:57,989 --> 00:03:03,469

You know, we made that initial flag to show we were beating the Russians in the space

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00:03:03,469 --> 00:03:04,859

race that we had going on at the time.

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00:03:04,859 --> 00:03:08,629

And I think, in our country, there was a lot more politically going on domestically of

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00:03:08,629 --> 00:03:13,029

where to spend money, what was a priority, and space just wasn't the priority right then.

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00:03:13,029 --> 00:03:17,329

So, is that to say that we've kind of come full circle now and, like, this is becoming

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00:03:17,329 --> 00:03:19,010

a greater priority for our nation?

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00:03:19,010 --> 00:03:23,059

I'm not sure if it's full circle or even a greater priority, but that's where we're at

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00:03:23,059 --> 00:03:24,059

right now.

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00:03:24,059 --> 00:03:28,370

Mike Pence: Just as the United States was the first nation to reach the moon in the

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00:03:28,370 --> 00:03:33,200

twentieth century, so too will we be the first nation to return astronauts to the moon in

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00:03:33,200 --> 00:03:34,640

the twenty first century.

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00:03:34,640 --> 00:03:36,779

So I think that's an exciting place to be.

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00:03:36,779 --> 00:03:41,640

We're getting to the moon, going to Mars with this mandate from the White House.

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00:03:41,640 --> 00:03:45,349

What's really the significance of returning to the moon, for NASA and for America?

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00:03:45,349 --> 00:03:49,519

I think it's a great time to be here at the Space Center.

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00:03:49,519 --> 00:03:55,120

So, it's finally at the point where we can go really expand and get out of low Earth

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00:03:55,120 --> 00:03:56,120

orbit, right.

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00:03:56,120 --> 00:03:58,900  
We've been trying to commercialize low Earth orbit for a while, and now we're at the point

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00:03:58,900 --> 00:04:03,129  
where we can go find a way to leverage the technologies, try to learn from a deep-space

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00:04:03,129 --> 00:04:05,760  
environment, and the moon is our closest neighbor to go from.

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00:04:05,760 --> 00:04:07,569  
And other countries are going now.

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00:04:07,569 --> 00:04:11,909  
I mean, you see, competition is something that's in our veins as Americans.

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00:04:11,909 --> 00:04:14,909  
So, China just put a rover on the moon.

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00:04:14,909 --> 00:04:18,949  
So we want to be a part of that again, right, so that's what charges our political machine

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00:04:18,949 --> 00:04:21,239  
to try to find a way to help us get there.

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00:04:21,239 --> 00:04:26,550  
So, between almost 50 years ago, when we left the moon, and our return, hopefully within

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00:04:26,550 --> 00:04:29,370  
the next five years, we've done a lot.

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00:04:29,370 --> 00:04:30,380  
We've learned a lot.

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00:04:30,380 --> 00:04:37,150

And, so, what has been evolution for us of,  
"Hey, we're smarter now.

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00:04:37,150 --> 00:04:40,030

It might be taking us a little bit of time  
to get back there, but we're way smarter than

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00:04:40,030 --> 00:04:42,300

we were 45 years ago."

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00:04:42,300 --> 00:04:44,729

I think a lot of it is fiscally.

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00:04:44,729 --> 00:04:48,319

Like, it's cost us tons of money to do what  
we've done.

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00:04:48,319 --> 00:04:52,550

And shuttle was announced, and supposed to  
launch weekly, right, and we couldn't pull

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00:04:52,550 --> 00:04:53,650

that off.

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00:04:53,650 --> 00:04:58,520

And now -- you know, there's ways for commercial  
companies to make money with data from on-orbit,

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00:04:58,520 --> 00:04:59,520

right.

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00:04:59,520 --> 00:05:02,389

I mean, our cellphone companies want to find  
a way to get out of the cell-tower business

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00:05:02,389 --> 00:05:03,870

and into orbit.

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00:05:03,870 --> 00:05:09,670  
So there's more of an industry participation,  
which is helping us, I think, make these steps

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00:05:09,670 --> 00:05:10,670  
quicker.

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00:05:10,670 --> 00:05:14,340  
Then you take the miniaturization of electronics,  
the added manufacturing capabilities -- it's

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00:05:14,340 --> 00:05:16,389  
just a little more doable.

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00:05:16,389 --> 00:05:18,389  
Yeah, I think you're right.

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00:05:18,389 --> 00:05:23,020  
Like, back then, it was just NASA, but nowadays  
we've got so many different commercial companies,

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00:05:23,020 --> 00:05:28,169  
commercial partners, and all of us working  
together, using the right capabilities with

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00:05:28,169 --> 00:05:33,780  
each other, I think that's what's really spurring  
the innovation, and the ability to get back

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00:05:33,780 --> 00:05:35,430  
so much faster this time around.

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00:05:35,430 --> 00:05:39,680  
I mean, ISS was sold -- it was the first program  
I worked when I first came out of college.

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00:05:39,680 --> 00:05:41,380  
And ISS was all about science.

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00:05:41,380 --> 00:05:44,849  
And I remember, in the beginning, it was this constant battle of, "Well, things are going

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00:05:44,849 --> 00:05:45,849  
wrong.

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00:05:45,849 --> 00:05:46,849  
Things are breaking.

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00:05:46,849 --> 00:05:47,849  
We have to spend crew time on fixing things."

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00:05:47,849 --> 00:05:49,189  
And you just couldn't get science up there.

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00:05:49,189 --> 00:05:50,409  
And they're finally at that point.

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00:05:50,409 --> 00:05:55,500  
Six-person crew, and you have talks of a commercial space station, and lots of healthcare companies

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00:05:55,500 --> 00:05:58,810  
and research-and-development companies trying to find ways to take advantage of microgravity

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00:05:58,810 --> 00:06:00,680  
to benefit all of us.

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00:06:00,680 --> 00:06:06,630  
So, you mentioned, obviously, both of you, the commercial aspect of where we are today.

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00:06:06,630 --> 00:06:11,630  
So I'm assuming that it's safe to say that, as we look towards Gateway -- which, obviously,

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00:06:11,630 --> 00:06:15,469

we're gonna get to here in a second -- we're going arm in arm with commercial companies

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00:06:15,469 --> 00:06:17,760

to make this a successful mission, yeah?

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00:06:17,760 --> 00:06:18,760

Yes, arm in arm.

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00:06:18,760 --> 00:06:21,539

And, you know, it's both -- We need them.

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00:06:21,539 --> 00:06:24,220

Again, this commercial business case that's starting to be out there.

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00:06:24,220 --> 00:06:26,539

The first piece of Gateway is a power-propulsion element.

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00:06:26,539 --> 00:06:31,379

So there's commercial satellites that will benefit from solar propulsion, solar-electric

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00:06:31,379 --> 00:06:37,469

propulsion, and finding ways to leverage that for us, as well.

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00:06:37,469 --> 00:06:41,860

The power and propulsion element will provide power, propulsion and communications to the

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00:06:41,860 --> 00:06:43,710

entire Gateway.

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00:06:43,710 --> 00:06:47,900

NASA is getting ready to make an award to an American company or companies to develop,

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00:06:47,900 --> 00:06:49,900

launch and test this element.

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00:06:49,900 --> 00:06:53,770

It's targeted to launch on a commercial rocket by 2022.

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00:06:53,770 --> 00:06:54,780

Yeah.

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00:06:54,780 --> 00:06:57,590

I mean, arm in arm.

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00:06:57,590 --> 00:06:58,600

Sometimes they're pulling us.

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00:06:58,600 --> 00:07:00,090

Sometimes we're pulling them.

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00:07:00,090 --> 00:07:01,810

But one way or another, we're all in this together.

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00:07:01,810 --> 00:07:05,820

And, of course, you can't forget the government side of the house, too, with SLS and Orion.

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00:07:05,820 --> 00:07:08,889

That's a crucial, crucial piece for us, as well.

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00:07:08,889 --> 00:07:13,340

And how it all plays together, again, I think that's what makes it interesting, and hopefully

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00:07:13,340 --> 00:07:15,540

a positive perception by everybody, too.

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00:07:15,540 --> 00:07:16,540

It's a way to make us stronger.

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00:07:16,540 --> 00:07:20,389

You know, the beginning of NASA, that 10 healthy centers, and you spread out the political

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00:07:20,389 --> 00:07:21,699

leverage across the country.

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00:07:21,699 --> 00:07:24,939

Now we have this spread-out political leverage over government systems, commercial systems,

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00:07:24,939 --> 00:07:26,219

all working and leveraging each other.

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00:07:26,219 --> 00:07:27,490

It's a really good time.

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00:07:27,490 --> 00:07:31,310

So, Mark, tell me what exactly is Gateway?

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00:07:31,310 --> 00:07:36,249

So, Gateway is a lunar outpost in the moon's orbit.

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00:07:36,249 --> 00:07:37,629

It's a camping trip.

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00:07:37,629 --> 00:07:40,449

I mean, we're going a quarter of a million miles away from home.

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00:07:40,449 --> 00:07:42,050

We need just the minimal stuff.

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00:07:42,050 --> 00:07:44,099

It's an RV in lunar orbit.

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00:07:44,099 --> 00:07:45,099

It's small.

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00:07:45,099 --> 00:07:46,099

Okay.

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00:07:46,099 --> 00:07:47,099

It's not Space Station.

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00:07:47,099 --> 00:07:48,099

It's a spacecraft.

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00:07:48,099 --> 00:07:51,759

It's a lunar outpost, a way point for us to aggregate pieces and, really, to get down

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00:07:51,759 --> 00:07:52,879

to the surface of the moon.

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00:07:52,879 --> 00:07:57,029

And, so, is this a "deliver it all at one time"?

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00:07:57,029 --> 00:08:01,469

Is this "fly things one piece at a time" like we did with Space Station, and connect them

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00:08:01,469 --> 00:08:02,570

once we're in orbit?

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00:08:02,570 --> 00:08:06,879

What's the process for getting from Earth's surface to orbit around the moon?

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00:08:06,879 --> 00:08:11,810

So, it's that "one piece at a time," like we did Space Station, and definitely figure

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00:08:11,810 --> 00:08:15,569

out what's that minimal capability you need now that we have this huge charge to land

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00:08:15,569 --> 00:08:17,419

humans on the moon within five years.

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00:08:17,419 --> 00:08:20,479

So, get up that power-propulsion element, commercially launched.

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00:08:20,479 --> 00:08:25,370

Delivery on orbit, actually, where a commercial provider will get it on orbit, check it out

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00:08:25,370 --> 00:08:28,310

for a year on their own, and then turn it over to the government.

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00:08:28,310 --> 00:08:31,010

So we will kind of be even more hands-off there.

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00:08:31,010 --> 00:08:34,501

Then JSC's building a utilization module, kind of like a node on Space Station -- a

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00:08:34,501 --> 00:08:37,820

bunch of docking ports, connector space, some habitable volume on the inside.

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00:08:37,820 --> 00:08:41,790

Get that up there, get logistics up there so that you've got some supplies, and then

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00:08:41,790 --> 00:08:46,030

start to put pieces of the lander up there so we can get boots on the moon in 2024.

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00:08:46,030 --> 00:08:48,890

And then, after that, you grow Gateway a little bit more, and you start to put some habitable

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00:08:48,890 --> 00:08:51,890

volume on there and you get a little bigger.

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00:08:51,890 --> 00:08:57,250

And it feels like we couldn't do what we do today with our strategy without the foundational

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00:08:57,250 --> 00:09:02,940

steps of what LSP has done, Commercial Crew has done, commercial cargo resupply, all these

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00:09:02,940 --> 00:09:03,940

other folks.

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00:09:03,940 --> 00:09:08,140

I can't imagine doing a program like this in the way we're doing it, lean and agile,

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00:09:08,140 --> 00:09:09,230

10, 15 years ago.

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00:09:09,230 --> 00:09:11,710

I mean, the timing is perfect with Commercial Crew.

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00:09:11,710 --> 00:09:16,480

I mean, all the work they've had to do to put human systems on commercial rockets and

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00:09:16,480 --> 00:09:22,030

figure out how to get requirements lined up to give a lot to the commercial providers

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00:09:22,030 --> 00:09:26,180

and find a way to assess that on our side,

we're gonna learn and leverage from that,

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00:09:26,180 --> 00:09:29,750

and Gateway's gonna be a human-tended system when Orion docks.

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00:09:29,750 --> 00:09:33,401

So we're trying to find that sweet spot of, we're not human-rated all the time, but when

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00:09:33,401 --> 00:09:36,140

Orion's there, we've got to find the right requirements to levy.

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00:09:36,140 --> 00:09:38,320

So, I mean, we're leveraging all over the place.

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00:09:38,320 --> 00:09:41,200

And then partnering with EGS, like I said, SLS/Orion is key.

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00:09:41,200 --> 00:09:42,890

That's how we get the crew up there.

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00:09:42,890 --> 00:09:46,780

And, ideally, the agency wants that huge, heavy lift capability to put up as big of

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00:09:46,780 --> 00:09:47,870

pieces as we can.

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00:09:47,870 --> 00:09:49,720

That's where you get efficiencies of scale.

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00:09:49,720 --> 00:09:50,720

All right.

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00:09:50,720 --> 00:09:52,880

So, coming back to where we are now.

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00:09:52,880 --> 00:09:56,780

So, Mark, you have been -- and I'm gonna get this wrong, so correct me.

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00:09:56,780 --> 00:10:02,940

You've been set up as the director at the Kennedy Space Center for the logistics module

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00:10:02,940 --> 00:10:03,940

of Gateway.

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00:10:03,940 --> 00:10:04,940

What is your title?

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00:10:04,940 --> 00:10:09,080

Yeah, so, I'll come off of that pedestal that Josh put me on.

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00:10:09,080 --> 00:10:13,790

I am the manager of the logistics element, which is really just a project office.

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00:10:13,790 --> 00:10:17,870

So, Johnson Space Center is the program office for Gateway, for all the different pieces

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00:10:17,870 --> 00:10:19,260

of gateway.

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00:10:19,260 --> 00:10:23,431

And my title now -- I guess I'm, like, Johnny, two weeks, maybe a month it's official, I

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00:10:23,431 --> 00:10:24,431

think.

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00:10:24,431 --> 00:10:27,650

So, it's Manager of Logistics Element for the Gateway Program.

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00:10:27,650 --> 00:10:31,820

In my defense, Mark described his job about 3 different ways to me over the course of

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00:10:31,820 --> 00:10:33,510

our time together that day.

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00:10:33,510 --> 00:10:38,560

The punchline is that these guys are way more focused on getting the job done than job titles.

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00:10:38,560 --> 00:10:40,750

I just make up a new title for you every week.

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00:10:40,750 --> 00:10:41,750

[ Laughter ]

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00:10:41,750 --> 00:10:43,450

Just every time somebody asks you, just make it up a little bit different?

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00:10:43,450 --> 00:10:44,450

"Oh, Mark?

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00:10:44,450 --> 00:10:45,450

Yeah, yeah.

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00:10:45,450 --> 00:10:46,450

Czar of Logistics.

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00:10:46,450 --> 00:10:47,450

Yes, yes, yes."

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00:10:47,450 --> 00:10:50,420

What exactly is the logistics module, and what's kind of included in that?

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00:10:50,420 --> 00:10:53,860

So, we're officially given the logistics element.

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00:10:53,860 --> 00:10:56,460

The "element" term means project office.

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00:10:56,460 --> 00:11:01,570

So we are all things delivery services to Gateway.

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00:11:01,570 --> 00:11:04,620

That includes a launch and a spacecraft.

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00:11:04,620 --> 00:11:09,780

The spacecraft will include a logistics module -- so, a volume that can carry cargo, whether

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00:11:09,780 --> 00:11:13,690

it's inside, pressurized, and will hook up to a docking port and astronauts can go enter

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00:11:13,690 --> 00:11:18,190

that habitable volume and do science or take out food or load it with trash, and it's also

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00:11:18,190 --> 00:11:23,370

the external ability to lock payloads onto the outside, or other pieces of Gateway that

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00:11:23,370 --> 00:11:25,150

we might want to bring up, like a robotic arm.

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00:11:25,150 --> 00:11:28,770

And, so, Johnny, where do you fit in this picture with Gateway?

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00:11:28,770 --> 00:11:33,400

I am supporting Mark and helping to set up what I'll call the project-control type stuff.

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00:11:33,400 --> 00:11:37,860

Listen to the inflection in his voice, because he's not sure what his title is, yet, either.

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00:11:37,860 --> 00:11:38,860

[ Laughter ]

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00:11:38,860 --> 00:11:39,860

So, project control.

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00:11:39,860 --> 00:11:40,860

What does that mean?

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00:11:40,860 --> 00:11:41,860

Unpack that for me.

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00:11:41,860 --> 00:11:43,620

So, it's like all the background, backbone type stuff.

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00:11:43,620 --> 00:11:50,670

Risk management, config management, budget resource, workforce, standing up the organization,

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00:11:50,670 --> 00:11:56,020

data management, how do we all collaborate and work together cohesively as a team?

228

00:11:56,020 --> 00:12:00,440

So, hopefully, it's all behind-the-scenes type stuff that just makes things work easier.

229

00:12:00,440 --> 00:12:01,440

He's selling himself short.

230

00:12:01,440 --> 00:12:04,400

So, I mean, the amount of whiteboard sessions we've done in the past -- I don't know if

231

00:12:04,400 --> 00:12:07,020

there's a title for, like, strategist.

232

00:12:07,020 --> 00:12:11,060

The two of us spent a lot of time in the beginning trying to brainstorm, "How do we pull in and

233

00:12:11,060 --> 00:12:13,370

leverage the rest of the Center?

234

00:12:13,370 --> 00:12:14,370

How do we do this?"

235

00:12:14,370 --> 00:12:18,180

And he's got a great creative brain, so it's been a huge help.

236

00:12:18,180 --> 00:12:19,750

So, what's got you really excited?

237

00:12:19,750 --> 00:12:22,740

What are you really focused on going into this project?

238

00:12:22,740 --> 00:12:25,120

I love doing what I'm doing right now.

239

00:12:25,120 --> 00:12:29,550

So, today has been this really cool day where we did these two town halls at the Center,

240

00:12:29,550 --> 00:12:33,700

and I get to sit in this, like, padded room that's not because I'm banging my head against

241

00:12:33,700 --> 00:12:34,700

the walls.

242

00:12:34,700 --> 00:12:35,780

I was gonna say -- [ Laughs ]

243

00:12:35,780 --> 00:12:38,330

Trying to make sure I can get the message out.

244

00:12:38,330 --> 00:12:44,360

I enjoy trying to inspire others and connect them with this awesome mission that we get.

245

00:12:44,360 --> 00:12:47,510

We do a lot of hard things in this agency, and it's so easy to get wrapped up in the

246

00:12:47,510 --> 00:12:51,910

art of what's impossible, and I get to try to help inspire people to the art of the possible.

247

00:12:51,910 --> 00:12:53,580

And that's what gets me out of bed.

248

00:12:53,580 --> 00:12:57,110

So, explain to me a little bit about kind of the path forward for Gateway.

249

00:12:57,110 --> 00:13:04,030

So, it seems like you guys are really in kind of a brainstorming and planning period.

250

00:13:04,030 --> 00:13:11,080

So how much do the other operations of Gateway impact you guys, and how much of it is you

251

00:13:11,080 --> 00:13:17,380

guys just really trying to figure out, like, "We need to be masters of our piece here.

252

00:13:17,380 --> 00:13:19,250

We need to make sure we can connect to the other guy.

253

00:13:19,250 --> 00:13:20,320

But we're just here doing our thing."

254

00:13:20,320 --> 00:13:22,830

There's so much of that going on right now.

255

00:13:22,830 --> 00:13:27,140

You know, the traditional NASA way of doing things is, line up all these requirements,

256

00:13:27,140 --> 00:13:32,300

decompose requirements for a long time, get them all perfect, and then let's go move forward.

257

00:13:32,300 --> 00:13:34,010

And we don't have that time.

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00:13:34,010 --> 00:13:38,480

So, you know, once you talk about, Johnny's in the throes right now of a bottoms-up, you

259

00:13:38,480 --> 00:13:39,480

know?

260

00:13:39,480 --> 00:13:42,650

We have to go figure out what this is gonna cost for the next 10 years.

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00:13:42,650 --> 00:13:43,650

And you're starting at zero.

262

00:13:43,650 --> 00:13:44,650

10 years, man.

263

00:13:44,650 --> 00:13:45,650

That's a long time.

264

00:13:45,650 --> 00:13:47,590

Trying to figure out how much it costs us.

265

00:13:47,590 --> 00:13:48,590

Have we been here 10 years?

266

00:13:48,590 --> 00:13:51,570

I don't think I've been at -- No, I guess  
we've been here 10 years.

267

00:13:51,570 --> 00:13:52,570

Time goes fast.

268

00:13:52,570 --> 00:13:53,570

But, I mean, it's hard.

269

00:13:53,570 --> 00:13:55,930

Think about the early years of your career,  
and saying, "All right, what am I gonna do

270

00:13:55,930 --> 00:13:57,490

for the next 10 years?"

271

00:13:57,490 --> 00:13:58,540

It's hard.

272

00:13:58,540 --> 00:14:02,250

But it does feel like -- all right, you tell  
me if I am wrong here, Mark, but it feels

273

00:14:02,250 --> 00:14:05,860

like it's project management 101 to the degree  
where, "All right.

274

00:14:05,860 --> 00:14:08,050

Let's start this massive new project.

275

00:14:08,050 --> 00:14:09,050

What will it take?

276

00:14:09,050 --> 00:14:10,050

'A,' I got to assemble the team.

277

00:14:10,050 --> 00:14:12,200

I got to figure out roles and responsibilities.

278

00:14:12,200 --> 00:14:16,210

What are the crucial first steps I need to outline out there?"

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00:14:16,210 --> 00:14:19,720

Let that get some traction, let that grow a little bit.

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00:14:19,720 --> 00:14:24,170

And then, as the team grows, and as the responsibility grows, we'll just keep on expanding a little

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00:14:24,170 --> 00:14:25,170

more.

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00:14:25,170 --> 00:14:29,350

But the core building blocks have to be there in terms of, like, requirements, operations,

283

00:14:29,350 --> 00:14:32,000

schedules, stuff like that.

284

00:14:32,000 --> 00:14:33,000

Yeah.

285

00:14:33,000 --> 00:14:38,860

You know, and it brings more emphasis to light of how you have to trust people and leverage

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00:14:38,860 --> 00:14:39,860

expertise, right.

287

00:14:39,860 --> 00:14:41,310

Delegate things down to the lowest level.

288

00:14:41,310 --> 00:14:43,320

Ask people what they think is right.

289

00:14:43,320 --> 00:14:46,810

And make sure you have open communication,  
transparent communication as you roll that

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00:14:46,810 --> 00:14:50,740

stuff up, and everybody understands the trades  
you're bouncing around in your head.

291

00:14:50,740 --> 00:14:51,740

Because you're spitballing it.

292

00:14:51,740 --> 00:14:53,730

You're trying to take that early wag.

293

00:14:53,730 --> 00:14:56,690

And then, in the requirements straight space,  
I mean, that's eating our lunch right now,

294

00:14:56,690 --> 00:14:59,710

trying to -- Level 2 would like to -- and  
I say Level 2.

295

00:14:59,710 --> 00:15:01,172

The program office at JSC, right.

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00:15:01,172 --> 00:15:03,700

They're working hard to try to nail down exactly  
what this is.

297

00:15:03,700 --> 00:15:07,340

But it's a commercial partnership, so there's only so much they know, and we don't have

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00:15:07,340 --> 00:15:08,770

the time to wait for everything.

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00:15:08,770 --> 00:15:11,640

So we're trying to run in parallel with them and communicate along the way.

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00:15:11,640 --> 00:15:12,640

"All right.

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00:15:12,640 --> 00:15:13,640

We're writing this down.

302

00:15:13,640 --> 00:15:14,680

Does that look like it lines up with you?"

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00:15:14,680 --> 00:15:19,630

And as long as we set up our contracts appropriately and have the flexibility, you can always change

304

00:15:19,630 --> 00:15:20,630

things.

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00:15:20,630 --> 00:15:23,530

It might cost you money to change things, but if you set it up the right way, and you

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00:15:23,530 --> 00:15:28,670

push down authority to the contracts, as well, you should have the flexibility to enable

307

00:15:28,670 --> 00:15:31,000

this in the long run.

308

00:15:31,000 --> 00:15:36,240

Sustainability is a big component of our return to the Moon, but what's that mean?

309

00:15:36,240 --> 00:15:37,720

We got to be sustainable.

310

00:15:37,720 --> 00:15:39,460

We have to find a way to be reusable, right?

311

00:15:39,460 --> 00:15:41,120

I mean, we're spending the taxpayers' dollars.

312

00:15:41,120 --> 00:15:43,250

Let's not just throw it all away in one shot.

313

00:15:43,250 --> 00:15:47,680

We want to go there to stay, and ultimately we want to find ways to push towards deep-space

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00:15:47,680 --> 00:15:51,760

transportation capabilities so that we can go out further in our solar system.

315

00:15:51,760 --> 00:15:58,570

So this is the learning, the early building blocks for us to get there.

316

00:15:58,570 --> 00:16:03,690

And, on a technical level, what do you see as being the greatest engineering challenges?

317

00:16:03,690 --> 00:16:09,240

Are we talking about, we're just repackaging lots of great technology, or are we, like,

318

00:16:09,240 --> 00:16:10,240

cutting-edge stuff here?

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00:16:10,240 --> 00:16:13,340

So, the environment out there in the lunar vicinity is much harsher.

320

00:16:13,340 --> 00:16:15,940

So, a lot stronger radiation environment.

321

00:16:15,940 --> 00:16:19,870

The extremes of hot and cold are definitely tougher.

322

00:16:19,870 --> 00:16:24,110

The biggest challenge -- and I remember an early control board talking through this -- we're

323

00:16:24,110 --> 00:16:28,630

not gonna have a crew there 24/7, so how do we make sure we're not just throwing things

324

00:16:28,630 --> 00:16:32,260

up to our garage and it sits there forever, like happens at my house?

325

00:16:32,260 --> 00:16:36,300

So there's a lot of talk about, how do we make sure we have intra-vehicle robotics,

326

00:16:36,300 --> 00:16:41,510

and how do we design things now for capabilities we're not sure of how we'll use them yet?

327

00:16:41,510 --> 00:16:46,530

So we got to, like, really leverage flexible designs so that we can do as many things autonomously

328

00:16:46,530 --> 00:16:48,670

as possible.

329

00:16:48,670 --> 00:16:53,180

I've been told that the orbit is not what you would typically think about for, like,

330

00:16:53,180 --> 00:16:54,280  
orbiting a body.

331

00:16:54,280 --> 00:16:59,780  
Like, Space Station stays fairly similar range  
to the Earth as it orbits.

332

00:16:59,780 --> 00:17:02,210  
It's something like 250 miles.

333

00:17:02,210 --> 00:17:05,270  
But I've heard that the orbit around the moon  
for Gateway is much different.

334

00:17:05,270 --> 00:17:06,819  
Is that accurate?

335

00:17:06,819 --> 00:17:08,630  
It's a highly elliptical orbit.

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00:17:08,630 --> 00:17:10,130  
So it gets really close.

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00:17:10,130 --> 00:17:14,370  
Now they're looking at, again, this halo orbit.

338

00:17:14,370 --> 00:17:17,390  
It's an elliptical orbit.

339

00:17:17,390 --> 00:17:18,390  
I don't know.

340

00:17:18,390 --> 00:17:19,390  
We're starting to get out of my wheelhouse.

341

00:17:19,390 --> 00:17:21,439  
This is where we're leveraging LSP, because

the PR only goes so far.

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00:17:21,439 --> 00:17:25,240

You know, the orbital mechanics takes a lot of smart people that know exactly what they're

343

00:17:25,240 --> 00:17:27,310

doing.

344

00:17:27,310 --> 00:17:28,890

It's in that highly elliptical orbit.

345

00:17:28,890 --> 00:17:31,070

We're orbiting the Earth just like the moon.

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00:17:31,070 --> 00:17:35,370

So, we just showed some views in a town hall where, if you step back, Gateway orbits the

347

00:17:35,370 --> 00:17:38,680

Earth, goes around the Earth in the same period as the moon.

348

00:17:38,680 --> 00:17:41,161

And then, if you look at it from a different perspective, it's this highly elliptical orbit

349

00:17:41,161 --> 00:17:45,020

around the moon, and kind of leveraging some of the equilibrium points in gravity, Lagrange

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00:17:45,020 --> 00:17:49,150

points out there so that it's pretty stable, it's easy to get in and out of, and it's a

351

00:17:49,150 --> 00:17:51,870

great place to leverage science opportunities.

352

00:17:51,870 --> 00:17:53,710

So, spitball me some numbers.

353

00:17:53,710 --> 00:17:57,640

How close do we get at our closest, and how far away do we get at our furthest?

354

00:17:57,640 --> 00:17:58,640

I don't know.

355

00:17:58,640 --> 00:18:00,080

I'd be making it up.

356

00:18:00,080 --> 00:18:01,080

[ Laughter ]

357

00:18:01,080 --> 00:18:03,450

Well, hey, you said that's what you're doing right now, right?

358

00:18:03,450 --> 00:18:04,450

You said you're just making it up as you go.

359

00:18:04,450 --> 00:18:07,480

I want to say you're in, like, the -- I don't even know.

360

00:18:07,480 --> 00:18:09,650

Hundreds of kilometers at the closest.

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00:18:09,650 --> 00:18:12,680

And then it's probably tens of thousands at the furthest.

362

00:18:12,680 --> 00:18:13,680

Okay.

363

00:18:13,680 --> 00:18:16,471

I'm gonna go back and look at that, and then everybody can laugh at me and say, "Yep, keep

364

00:18:16,471 --> 00:18:19,320

him doing podcasts and now actually running pen to paper.”

365

00:18:19,320 --> 00:18:21,960

[ Laughs ]

366

00:18:21,960 --> 00:18:24,050

It's not as close as Space Station.

367

00:18:24,050 --> 00:18:28,511

When it gets in that low orbit around the moon -- I wish I still had Joe Dant.

368

00:18:28,511 --> 00:18:30,530

He was just in here with us with the town hall.

369

00:18:30,530 --> 00:18:34,390

We got some really sharp people across this center that know this stuff better.

370

00:18:34,390 --> 00:18:37,570

But I don't think it gets as close as Space Station is to us today.

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00:18:37,570 --> 00:18:40,480

So the lunar landers have to bring the capabilities to actually descend.

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00:18:40,480 --> 00:18:42,570

But, again, the gravity well is a lot different.

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00:18:42,570 --> 00:18:46,540

It's not as strong, so it's easier to get down, and they got to have the ascent capability

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00:18:46,540 --> 00:18:47,540

to get back.

375

00:18:47,540 --> 00:18:51,440

So Gateway's kind of that safe haven for them to get back to and be able to stage the crew,

376

00:18:51,440 --> 00:18:53,840

get back on Orion, and get back home.

377

00:18:53,840 --> 00:18:55,780

Mark was actually pretty close.

378

00:18:55,780 --> 00:19:00,150

We got a hold of Joe Dant, who is the ranking member of the Gateway team representing safety

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00:19:00,150 --> 00:19:04,800

and mission assurance, and he was able to confirm that Gateway's apolune, or furthest

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00:19:04,800 --> 00:19:11,340

point from the moon, is 75,000 km and its perilune, or closest point to the moon, is

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00:19:11,340 --> 00:19:12,470

3,200 km.

382

00:19:12,470 --> 00:19:18,190

At its closest, that's about the diameter of the moon and at its farthest it is equivalent

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00:19:18,190 --> 00:19:22,160

to about 20 percent of the distance between the earth and the moon.

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00:19:22,160 --> 00:19:28,040

And, so, why is this kind of an orbit better than just kind of staying close to the moon

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00:19:28,040 --> 00:19:30,630

and kind of keeping that tight orbit around the moon?

386

00:19:30,630 --> 00:19:33,070

Because then it's easier for Orion to get to.

387

00:19:33,070 --> 00:19:39,100

So, we don't have to have the tight tolerances of getting Orion really close to the moon.

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00:19:39,100 --> 00:19:43,720

You can go rendezvous with Gateway when it's further away and it's not as hard to get into.

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00:19:43,720 --> 00:19:47,180

Gives you a little bit less Delta-v to get there, and then you ride this orbit -- you

390

00:19:47,180 --> 00:19:51,940

know, when you kind of switch planes a little bit and ride this orbit in closer to the surface.

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00:19:51,940 --> 00:19:55,550

And I know you mentioned 10 years for budget, planning.

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00:19:55,550 --> 00:19:56,760

That's a long time.

393

00:19:56,760 --> 00:20:02,100

[ Chuckles ] So, what's the projected timeline for things coming together?

394

00:20:02,100 --> 00:20:06,760

And when you think about a 10-year plan, what are you guys putting in that 10-year plan?

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00:20:06,760 --> 00:20:10,520

So, kind of like you mentioned, the first element --

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00:20:10,520 --> 00:20:14,320

For the record, I just got a couple of guys staring at each other, really, like...

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00:20:14,320 --> 00:20:18,660

It's, like, changing every day, so we had to look at each other like, "Did anything

398

00:20:18,660 --> 00:20:19,660

happen this morning?

399

00:20:19,660 --> 00:20:20,660

Did it change again?"

400

00:20:20,660 --> 00:20:22,600

I mean, like, there's a manifest out there.

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00:20:22,600 --> 00:20:25,690

So there's a high-level guidance as far as, like, "Here's Gateway.

402

00:20:25,690 --> 00:20:29,840

Here's the essential building blocks for that, and here's when we want to launch it and put

403

00:20:29,840 --> 00:20:30,840

it all together."

404

00:20:30,840 --> 00:20:37,880

So, we have a rough master plan, per se, to build against, and that's what we're executing

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00:20:37,880 --> 00:20:38,880

against.

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00:20:38,880 --> 00:20:42,540

So as we're laying the details for each of those components, we kind of fine tune it

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00:20:42,540 --> 00:20:44,900

and say, "Oh, okay, I think this is much more realistic.

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00:20:44,900 --> 00:20:49,740

Oh, hey, I think this is not so realistic," or, "We'll need some more money to make this

409

00:20:49,740 --> 00:20:50,970

happen or not."

410

00:20:50,970 --> 00:20:55,940

So I think that's where this cycle all comes together.

411

00:20:55,940 --> 00:21:00,090

We have the rough blueprints, but as we come together with this project-management review,

412

00:21:00,090 --> 00:21:03,230

I think we'll see exactly, "Okay, this is highly achievable.

413

00:21:03,230 --> 00:21:07,330

Okay, this, we need to carry a risk against," and we can work on that over the next couple

414

00:21:07,330 --> 00:21:08,330

years.

415

00:21:08,330 --> 00:21:13,070

I mean, Space Station took 10, 12 years for assembly complete.

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00:21:13,070 --> 00:21:16,770

You know, that first FGB in the node I think went up in '98.

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00:21:16,770 --> 00:21:20,750

Mr. Cabana, I hear him scratching his head, wondering why I don't know the exact date.

418

00:21:20,750 --> 00:21:21,750

That was his mission.

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00:21:21,750 --> 00:21:23,870

So, that was the first two pieces going together.

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00:21:23,870 --> 00:21:27,830

The first crew went on orbit -- that was when I first started working -- was in October

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00:21:27,830 --> 00:21:29,280

2000.

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00:21:29,280 --> 00:21:31,830

And it went through the end of the shuttle program, was getting all the major pieces

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00:21:31,830 --> 00:21:32,950

up there and assembling it.

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00:21:32,950 --> 00:21:34,550

So, we're not a space station.

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00:21:34,550 --> 00:21:35,550

I mentioned that before.

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00:21:35,550 --> 00:21:36,550

It's something smaller.

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00:21:36,550 --> 00:21:41,510

So it's like six launches, you know, to get all the main pieces we need put together.

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00:21:41,510 --> 00:21:45,210

So everything that we're looking at in this 10-year period is in the short term.

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00:21:45,210 --> 00:21:48,460

It's accelerated a little bit to get boots on the moon even sooner.

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00:21:48,460 --> 00:21:49,460

[sound effect]

431

00:21:49,460 --> 00:21:53,400

And is the focus really on the moon at that point, or is there opportunity to use Gateway

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00:21:53,400 --> 00:21:54,590

for further exploration?

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00:21:54,590 --> 00:21:57,680

So, the focus is definitely on the moon.

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00:21:57,680 --> 00:22:03,320

But what Gateway is showing, it's that test objective for us to start to understand what

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00:22:03,320 --> 00:22:04,660

would it take to go to Mars.

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00:22:04,660 --> 00:22:09,700

So the agency's looked at, for years, a deep-space transport capability, which would have to

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00:22:09,700 --> 00:22:13,600

be something small, to have habitable volume for a crew, and have to have some kind of

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00:22:13,600 --> 00:22:16,450

propulsion that could get them out there, and you'd probably dock Orion to it.

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00:22:16,450 --> 00:22:20,870

So Gateway is kind of a first analogue for what that might become, and help us learn

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00:22:20,870 --> 00:22:21,870

from that.

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00:22:21,870 --> 00:22:24,830

Just like we learned in low Earth orbit Space Station, now we're gonna go learn a quarter

442

00:22:24,830 --> 00:22:28,030

of a million miles away from home, something a lot smaller, that camping trip, and start

443

00:22:28,030 --> 00:22:31,640

to understand how we can explore deep space.

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00:22:31,640 --> 00:22:35,280

Will there be a regular human presence on board like we see with Space Station today?

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00:22:35,280 --> 00:22:36,280

So, no.

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00:22:36,280 --> 00:22:39,830

So, Space Station, right, it's got 24/7 human operations.

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00:22:39,830 --> 00:22:41,260

Gateway is that camping trip.

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00:22:41,260 --> 00:22:45,680

So we're setting it up to go out there for a 30-day mission at first, and as we start

449

00:22:45,680 --> 00:22:51,680

to expand the habitable capabilities of the modules, we can hopefully get to 60, 90 days,

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00:22:51,680 --> 00:22:52,710

maybe got a little bit beyond.

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00:22:52,710 --> 00:22:54,630

But we're trying to size it for that small.

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00:22:54,630 --> 00:22:57,780

Go once a year, and go for 30, 60, 90 days.

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00:22:57,780 --> 00:23:03,860

And, kind of, as the leader of the team here at KSC, do you guys feel a significant weight

454

00:23:03,860 --> 00:23:07,040

this year with the 50th anniversary of our first walk on the moon?

455

00:23:07,040 --> 00:23:11,260

So, I am blessed to have some amazing people at the Space Center helping me, and I couldn't

456

00:23:11,260 --> 00:23:16,160

get there without all the expertise and all the passion that's coming from this team.

457

00:23:16,160 --> 00:23:21,130

And it's definitely -- you know, we all look around, a lot of us don't have memories of

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00:23:21,130 --> 00:23:22,250

50 years ago, right?

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00:23:22,250 --> 00:23:27,480

So we know we're standing on the shoulders of giants, and it's pretty nostalgic and pretty

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00:23:27,480 --> 00:23:30,270

emotional to think about the opportunity that's

before us.

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00:23:30,270 --> 00:23:32,280

So we're all really excited about that.

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00:23:32,280 --> 00:23:37,290

That definitely makes it much more impactful and exciting.

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00:23:37,290 --> 00:23:40,940

I've had the opportunity over the course of my career to work a couple times where you

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00:23:40,940 --> 00:23:44,170

get to put together something that people don't think you're able to do.

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00:23:44,170 --> 00:23:46,130

That's what our agency's founded on, right?

466

00:23:46,130 --> 00:23:48,890

I mean, this whole "Failure is not an option," right?

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00:23:48,890 --> 00:23:50,600

That's what we're doing in Gateway.

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00:23:50,600 --> 00:23:56,280

So, I mean, we are totally focused on trying to mold the clay into something that's gonna

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00:23:56,280 --> 00:24:00,600

be sustained excitement for the Space Coast, for Florida, for our agency, and something

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00:24:00,600 --> 00:24:02,700

that we're proud of going forward.

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00:24:02,700 --> 00:24:06,360

And we're getting a little bit ahead of ourselves with this question, but thinking about the

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00:24:06,360 --> 00:24:10,080

future, obviously thinking about -- whenever you start a new project, you're thinking about

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00:24:10,080 --> 00:24:11,380

your end goal.

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00:24:11,380 --> 00:24:12,380

What do you think it's gonna be like?

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00:24:12,380 --> 00:24:16,150

How are you gonna be feeling when we start seeing pieces of Gateway fly, and when we

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00:24:16,150 --> 00:24:17,780

turn on the lights?

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00:24:17,780 --> 00:24:21,580

So, I've thought about this question a couple times as I go through it.

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00:24:21,580 --> 00:24:24,740

You know, there's so many times where you lose sleep, where your head is just spinning

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00:24:24,740 --> 00:24:28,800

trying to understand what information is being throw at you, and how you're gonna put it

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00:24:28,800 --> 00:24:29,800

all together.

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00:24:29,800 --> 00:24:34,630

And you get a little bit of reprieve when you step back and think about how awesome

482

00:24:34,630 --> 00:24:36,230  
of a challenge this is we're doing.

483

00:24:36,230 --> 00:24:40,140  
I have a feeling that when the day comes that  
we first turn on the lights, I'm gonna be

484

00:24:40,140 --> 00:24:43,730  
so buried in trying to figure out how we get  
past the next problem that I'm not gonna be

485

00:24:43,730 --> 00:24:45,679  
able to step back and enjoy it.

486

00:24:45,679 --> 00:24:49,280  
But I hope someone pinches me and we do, because  
we're going back to the moon.

487

00:24:49,280 --> 00:24:52,620  
I mean, this is -- it's hard to even fathom  
this.

488

00:24:52,620 --> 00:24:53,620  
It's really amazing.

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00:24:53,620 --> 00:24:56,570  
I mean, this is the stuff that inspires the  
next generation.

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00:24:56,570 --> 00:24:57,980  
And I was inspired by movies.

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00:24:57,980 --> 00:25:02,730  
And so many people find little things in science  
fiction and turn it into science fact, and

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00:25:02,730 --> 00:25:08,559  
we're paving in that ground for our kindergartners  
and our sixth graders and the child that's

493

00:25:08,559 --> 00:25:10,650

not born yet, which is really neat.

494

00:25:10,650 --> 00:25:13,350

All right, guys.

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00:25:13,350 --> 00:25:16,550

Thank you so much, Johnny and Mark.

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00:25:16,550 --> 00:25:18,200

Best of luck to you guys.

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00:25:18,200 --> 00:25:20,250

Obviously the nation is watching.

498

00:25:20,250 --> 00:25:23,290

We're excited to see you guys succeed over the next five years.

499

00:25:23,290 --> 00:25:24,290

Thank you for having us, Josh.

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00:25:24,290 --> 00:25:25,290

This was awesome.

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00:25:25,290 --> 00:25:28,490

We're very excited to be the voice of Kennedy to try to bring this to bear, and it's gonna

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00:25:28,490 --> 00:25:29,590

take the whole workforce.

503

00:25:29,590 --> 00:25:30,590

Yeah, me too.

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00:25:30,590 --> 00:25:31,590

And thank you.

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00:25:31,590 --> 00:25:35,940

It's a great time to be out here, to be part of something so important, to have a little

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00:25:35,940 --> 00:25:36,940

bit of a legacy.

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00:25:36,940 --> 00:25:39,960

We got a design review to get to.

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00:25:39,960 --> 00:25:43,550

I'm Joshua Santora, and that's our show.

509

00:25:43,550 --> 00:25:45,000

Thanks for stoppin' by the rocket ranch.

510

00:25:45,000 --> 00:25:49,000

And special thanks to our guests Mark Wiese and Johnny Nguyen.

511

00:25:49,000 --> 00:25:55,610

To learn more about mankind's future exploration of the Moon, visit [nasa.gov/moontomars](https://nasa.gov/moontomars).

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00:25:55,610 --> 00:25:59,500

And to learn more about everything going on at the Kennedy Space Center, go to [nasa.gov/kennedy](https://nasa.gov/kennedy).

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00:25:59,500 --> 00:26:05,050

Check out NASA's other podcasts to learn more about what's happening at all of our

514

00:26:05,050 --> 00:26:09,440

centers at [nasa.gov/podcasts](https://nasa.gov/podcasts).

515

00:26:09,440 --> 00:26:14,180

A special shout-out to my colleague, Amanda Griffin, our producer, John Sackman, our soundman

516

00:26:14,180 --> 00:26:17,040

Lorne Mathre, and editor Michelle Stone.

517

00:26:17,040 --> 00:26:21,470

And remember: on the rocket ranch... even  
the sky isn't the limit.

518

00:26:21,470 --> 00:26:24,620

Did he say that with a smirk on his face?