

## **AIR FORCE TO LAUNCH SOUNDING ROCKET FROM REMOTE KODIAK ISLAND SITE OFF ALASKA**

The Air Force launched a small sounding rocket from remote Kodiak Island off Alaska. The two-stage rocket, which is made from refurbished motors from a deactivated Minuteman II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, is part of a test to determine if West Coast-based radar is capable of detecting inbound ballistic missile attacks to the continental United States.

The late October test from the Kodiak Launch Complex appeared to be the best launch site for the test because of its remote location, Air Force officials said. The launch was the first for Kodiak, which is being developed as a commercial spaceport by the Alaska Aerospace Development Corp.

The spaceport has been under development since 1991 but languished until Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, threw his considerable political weight behind the project. Because of the Stevens support, the Pentagon and NASA are contributing about \$23 million of the estimated \$30 million that is being used to develop Kodiak.

The late October launch was managed by the Space and Missile Systems Center at Los Angeles Air Force Base. The program office is at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M. Another ballistic-missile test, also using a sounding rocket, is scheduled at Kodiak in August 1999.

Kodiak is one of several spaceports that are being developed in the United States for military, civil and commercial launches. As the reusable launch vehicle business grows, other spaceports around the country could crop up as well, according to sources.

### **Developing U.S. Spaceports At A Glance**

ALASKA - On Kodiak Island off Alaska.

CALIFORNIA - On Vandenberg Air Force Base north of Los Angeles.

FLORIDA - On Cape Canaveral Air Station on the state's western coast.

NEW MEXICO - Adjacent to the White Sands Missile Range near Las Cruces.

VIRGINIA - On Wallops Island south of Washington. Source: SBN Files

[To Index](#)

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