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X-33 Program Completes Operations Review

From: NASANews@hq.nasa.gov
Date: Wed, 18 Dec 1996 15:19:37 -0500 (EST)
Fwd Date: Thu, 19 Dec 1996 03:21:50 -0500
Subject: X-33 Program Completes Operations Review

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X-33 PROGRAM COMPLETES OPERATIONS REVIEW

For the second time in as many months, government and industry managers have successfully completed a Preliminary Design Review (PDR) for the X-33 technology demonstration program. This design review for the operations segment and ground systems segment of the X-33 represents the last in a series of PDRs.

The three day PDR conducted last week in California, with NASA and industry team members in attendance, confirmed readiness to begin detailed design of the X-33 Ground Support System and Launch Facility at Edwards Air Force Base, CA. Last month, a week-long PDR approved a baseline configuration for final detailed vehicle design and long-lead procurement. The next major milestones for the program are a series of Critical Design Reviews (CDRs) starting in January and culminating in an August Operations CDR. Construction of a 25-acre launch facility at Edwards is expected to begin in October 1997.

The X-33, a half-scale technology demonstrator, is scheduled to make as many as fifteen flights during a 10-month period, beginning in March 1999. Launched vertically from Edwards, it will fly up to 15 times the speed of sound at altitudes approaching 50 miles. Potential landing sites are located in California, Utah, Montana and the state of Washington. The flagship vehicle in the agency's Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) program, X-33 is intended to pave the way for a full scale, commercially-developed RLV after the turn of the century, which could dramatically reduce the cost of putting payloads into space.

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