

# Space News ROUNDUP!

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## JSC employees to get first 'Launch Break'

JSC employees will take their first "Launch Break" for the upcoming STS-90 mission, following up on an employee suggestion with an officially recognized voluntary pause in the workday to watch all shuttle launches.

The suggestion, submitted in September, proposed that employees take a break from their activities to focus on the space shuttle launch as a way of maintaining

heightened awareness and appreciation for this dynamic event. Center management approved the suggestion with a few changes to enable effective implementation.

While the pause is voluntary, JSC managers are encouraged to provide breaks in meetings and other non-critical activities. Center organizations are asked to allow access to conference rooms and other locations equipped with NASA Television.

A primary location for observing the launch will be Teague Auditorium, where the countdown and ascent will be shown on the large screen. A speaker, usually from the Flight Director or Astronaut Office, will provide in-person commentary during the launch and respond to questions afterward. Members of the public attending the Space Center Houston tram tour also will be in the auditorium. Contract employees are

welcome, although JSC is not directing any contractor to institute a similar program.

"The employee suggestion program gives everyone the opportunity to have a voice in improving how we do business. We rely on the good ideas and enthusiasm of the workforce to continually put new energy into the system," said Human Resources Director Harvey Hartman.



JSC Photo 98-03651 by Steve Candler

JSC Director George Abbey, left, meets with international documentation engineer Joella Delheimer, Texas State Comptroller John Sharp and Jim Wade of the International Space Station inside the International Space Station's U.S. laboratory module mockup in Bldg. 9 after Sharp's release of a report detailing JSC's contributions to Texas.

## Sharp report details JSC's contributions

Texas State Comptroller John Sharp last month released a detailed report describing the prestige and economic benefits JSC bring to Houston and Texas during a visit here.

The details are in the March edition of Sharp's Fiscal Notes, which he released in a March 24 Bldg. 9 ceremony with JSC Director George Abbey. The newsletter featured reports on the importance of the space program to the Houston economy, to Texas schools and universities, and to everyone who uses products developed for the space program—whether they realize it or not.

"Before the arrival of JSC, Houston was not well known internationally," Sharp said. "The space program helped bring worldwide attention and acclaim to the city; and Houston and the rest of the state continue to reap the rewards of having JSC as a neighbor."

"Unfortunately, we in state government sometimes become complacent about the importance of NASA and JSC to the Texas economy," Sharp said. "Whenever a large corporation decides to shop around for a new home, it seems there's no limit to the financial incentives people will offer to persuade that company to stay. But when members of Congress talk about cutting funding for the International Space Station, or focusing NASA's resources on unmanned space programs, we don't hear much from state government. That attitude has got to change."

"The state should do whatever it can to provide the infrastructure, education, and services that JSC needs to thrive and grow," Sharp said. "I am committed to doing whatever is necessary to promote the growth of JSC's presence in Texas. I need the input of the people who work every day here at JSC, and in the Clear Lake and Houston area. There is no question that Texas should be your biggest ally. If we work together to make sure that NASA and officials in Washington have no doubt that this part of Texas will always be the center for space exploration, then the economic potential of this area will be as limitless as space itself."

Sharp reported that since JSC became the command center for NASA's human space flight program in

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## First JSC Annual Report 'healthy'

JSC released its first-ever Annual Report late last month, a 42-page document that chronicles the center's activities during fiscal year 1997 in the areas of management initiatives, operations, research and development, business relations and community outreach.

"Fiscal Year 1997 was another excellent year for the Johnson Space Center," wrote JSC Director George Abbey in his introduction. "We made significant progress in our programs, continued the transition to our lead center responsibilities and strengthened our partnerships with other space-faring nations, other NASA centers and the community."

"Across the Johnson Space Center, we continued to demonstrate the breadth and versatility of our workforce and our facilities," he continued. "We continued to strive for efficiencies in operations, consolidate support activities and demonstrate new and better ways of getting our jobs done. Above all, FY 1997 demon-

strated again the exceptional talent, the unmatched dedication and the unparalleled commitment of our people. Their accomplishments exemplify the spirit of exploration that will carry the nation and the world forward."

The report also includes financial information covering all center activities and 100 percent of the center's budget authority, prepared pursuant to the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990, the Government Management Reform Act of 1994 and Office of Management and Budget Bulletin 94-01, "Form and Content of Agency Financial Statements."

"There has been substantial change this year in our total program and operating expenses," wrote Chief Financial Officer Wayne Draper. "In FY 1996, these expenses were \$2.9 billion; in FY 1997 they grew more than 10 percent to \$3.2 billion. Even more striking is the growth in Johnson Space Center

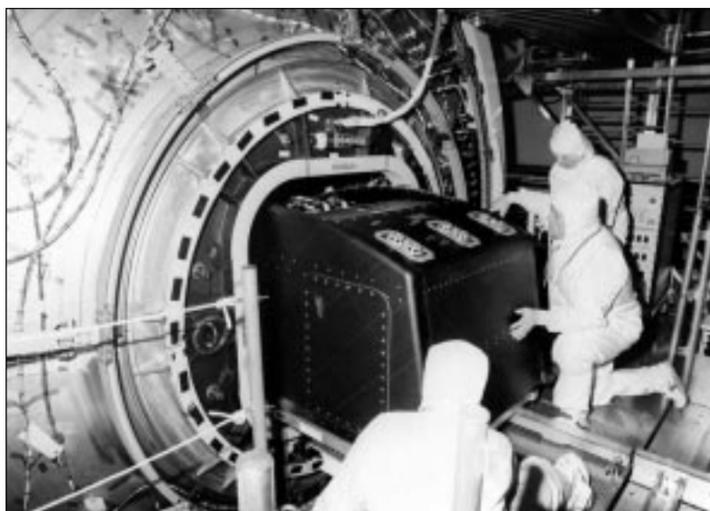
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## First station rack slides into module

The first system rack is now inside the International Space Station's U.S. laboratory module, which will be the centerpiece of station research and unprecedented science experiments.

The first rack was installed recently by Boeing technicians in the space station manufacturing building at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. The rack is the first of two that will supply electrical power to the scientific racks inside the laboratory module. When the laboratory module is in orbit, it will have a total of 24 racks, 13 of those containing science experiments. The other 11 racks will provide power, temperature and humidity control, air revital-

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NASA Photo

Technicians with The Boeing Company at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center carefully slide the first system rack inside the U.S. laboratory module for the International Space Station. The recently installed rack, about the size of a closet and weighing almost 1,200 pounds, is the first of two that will supply electrical power to the scientific racks inside the laboratory module.

## Shuttle managers select April 16 for Columbia launch

Space shuttle program managers selected Thursday, April 16, as the launch date for the STS-90 Neurolab mission.

The launch date decision came at the conclusion of the traditional face-to-face Flight Readiness Review at Kennedy Space Center by shuttle managers from NASA and prime contractor United Space Alliance, who examined at the readiness of the flight crew, vehicle, launch and mission control flight teams.

Commander Rick Searfoss, Pilot Scott Altman, Mission Specialists Rick Linnehan, Dave Williams and Kay Hire, and Payload Specialists Jay Buckley and Jim Pawelczyk will fly to Florida early next week to receive their final pre-flight briefings and to practice landings at

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