



March 2025

Update

**Oklahoma Space
Alliance**

A Chapter of The
National Space Society

A free email newsletter of the Oklahoma Space Alliance

Lunar Sunrise



Credit: Firefly Aerospace



March 2025 OSA Meeting

Saturday, March 8, 2025

2:00 PM

Norman Computers

916 W Main St, Norman, OK 73069

405-863-6173

Program— Space News and
Events

Website: <http://osa.nss.org>

Quote of the Month

Realistically, at this point in time I will settle for anything that's not a car. – Turkish amateur astronomer "G" after Tesla misidentification

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Oklahoma Space Alliance Update

March 8, 2025

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The *Oklahoma Space Alliance Update* is a bi-monthly newsletter of the Oklahoma Space Alliance a chapter of the National Space Society, a non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C. The address of OSA is **102 W. Linn, #1, Norman, OK 73071.**

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One and a Half Successful Landings



Credit: Firefly Aerospace

On March 2, Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost made the first completely successful commercial landing on the moon. Just four days later, Intuitive Machines' Athena lander touched down in the Mons Mouton region near the lunar south pole, but it seems that it tipped over like IM's first landing.

Articles: <https://spacenews.com/firefly-blue-ghost-1-lands-on-the-moon/>

<https://www.space.com/the-universe/moon/were-on-the-moon-private-blue-ghost-moon-lander-aces-historic-lunar-landing-for-nasa>

<https://www.space.com/the-universe/moon/sunrise-on-the-moon-private-blue-ghost-lander-captures-amazing-shot-after-historic-lunar-touchdown-photo>

<https://www.space.com/the-universe/moon/intuitive-machines-lands-private-athena-lander-near-moon-south-pole-historic-touchdown>

<https://spacenews.com/im-2-lunar-lander-touches-down-status-unclear/>

The Lunar Flotilla



Credit: Firefly Aerospace

For the first time ever, for a short while there were three spacecraft en route to the lunar surface, and another one headed for lunar orbit. But one of them is in trouble...

Articles: <https://spacenews.com/blue-ghost-1-enters-lunar-orbit-as-resilience-flies-by-the-moon/>

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/launches-spacecraft/spacex-rocket-launches-private-moon-lander-and-nasa-trailblazer-to-hunt-for-lunar-water>

<https://spacenews.com/falcon-9-launches-second-intuitive-machines-lunar-lander/>

<https://www.space.com/nasa-lunar-trailblazer-moon-probe-not-responding>

<https://spacenews.com/lunar-trailblazer-odin-spacecraft-suffering-problems-after-im-2-launch/>

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/missions/nasa-lunar-trailblazer-moon-probe-spinning-low-power-future-looks-grim>

<https://spacenews.com/nasa-still-working-to-restore-contact-with-lunar-trailblazer/>

Déjà vu, Unfortunately



Credit: SpaceX

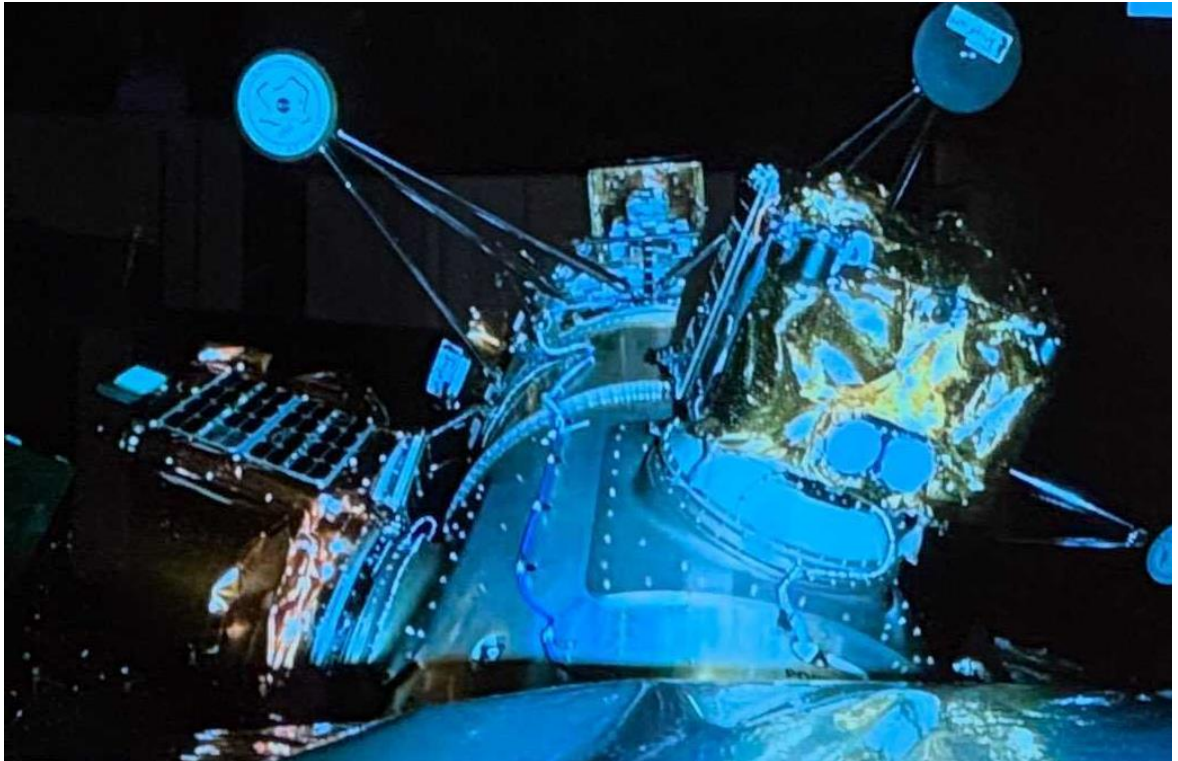
Starship's eighth flight on March 6 was a virtual repeat of Flight 7 – successful return of the first stage, and loss of Starship before it made orbit. Another beautiful meteor display over the Bahamas...

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/private-spaceflight/spacex-loses-starship-upper-stage-again-but-catches-giant-super-heavy-booster-during-flight-8-launch-video>

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/launches-spacecraft/watch-fiery-spacex-starship-flight-8-debris-rain-down-over-the-bahamas-video>

<https://spacenews.com/starship-destroyed-on-second-consecutive-test-flight/>

Little Prospect for the Asteroid Prospector



Credit: AstroForge/SpaceX

AstroForge's asteroid prospector Odin was a hitchhiker on the same Falcon 9 that sent Intuitive Machines' Athena mission moonward. But contact was lost shortly after deployment. Back to the drawing board...

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/private-spaceflight/hope-is-all-but-lost-for-private-asteroid-probe-in-deep-space-the-chance-of-talking-with-odin-is-minimal>

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/private-spaceflight/i-think-we-all-know-that-hope-is-fading-private-odin-asteroid-probe-is-tumbling-in-space>

Tenth Suborbital



Credit: Blue Origin

Blue Origin launched its tenth New Shepard tourist flight on February 25. Unusually, one of the six passengers chose to remain at least semi-anonymous. The next one will have an all-female crew, including Katy Perry and Jeff Bezos' fiancé.

Articles: <https://spacenews.com/blue-origin-launches-tenth-new-shepard-suborbital-human-spaceflight/>

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/human-spaceflight/katy-perry-and-historic-all-female-crew-will-launch-to-space-on-blue-origin-rocket>

Private Sector Not Immune



Credit: Blue Origin

Blue Origin is laying off 10% of its workforce (more than 1,000 employees) to restructure the company and reduce bureaucracy.

Article: <https://spacenews.com/blue-origin-to-lay-off-10-of-its-workforce/>

Still in There Pitching

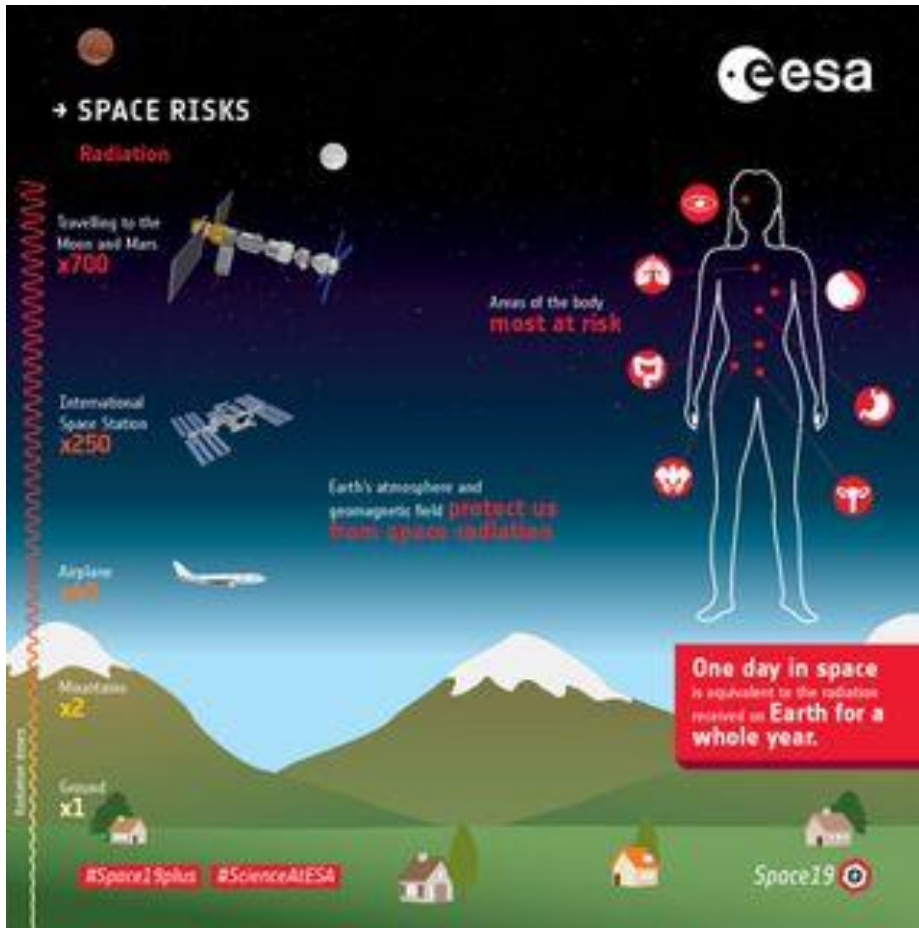


Credit: Virgin Galactic

Virgin Galactic plans to start assembling the first of its new generation of suborbital spaceplanes this month. Commercial flights in the new vehicle are targeted for the middle of 2026.

Article: <https://spacenews.com/virgin-galactic-to-start-assembly-of-first-new-spaceplane-in-march/>

Radiation Barrier?



Credit: ESA

3D-printed hydrogels may do the job.

Article: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/tech/3d-printed-hydrogels-could-be-future-space-radiation-shields-for-astronaut-trips-to-mars>

Varda's Back



Credit: Varda Space Industries.

Varda Space's W-2 capsule landing in the Koonibba Test Range in South Australia marked the first commercial spacecraft to touch down on Australian soil. The data it collected for the Air Force Research Laboratory will help refine thermal protection systems, sensor designs, and aerodynamics for future hypersonic vehicles.

Articles: <https://spacenews.com/var-da-space-capsule-lands-in-australia-with-critical-data-for-hypersonic-vehicles/>

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/tech/var-da-space-capsule-returns-to-earth-in-1st-commercial-landing-in-australian-outback-photos>

Iron Dome to Golden Dome



Credit: Missile Defense Agency

The Trump administration's Iron Dome missile defense shield has been renamed Golden Dome. Trump has ordered the DoD to cut \$50B from its budget, but the cuts won't come here.

Articles: <https://spacenews.com/golden-dome-replaces-iron-dome-pentagon-renames-missile-defense-initiative/>

<https://spacenews.com/trump-orders-50-billion-cut-from-2026-defense-budget-shields-iron-dome-initiative/>

<https://spacenews.com/gop-senators-back-trumps-space-based-iron-dome-plan-with-19-5b-bill/>

<https://spacenews.com/space-force-general-golden-dome-missile-shield-requires-manhattan-project-scale-effort/>

Contra Musk



Credit: NASA

The American astronauts aboard ISS disagree with Elon that it's time to retire the space station.

Article: <https://spacenews.com/iss-astronauts-reject-call-for-early-retirement-of-the-station/>

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/human-spaceflight/from-my-standpoint-politics-is-not-playing-into-this-at-all-stuck-nasa-astronauts-on-iss-grilled-on-earthly-politics-as-long-9-month-mission-nears-end>

Slow Fade to Black



Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

Almost 50 years old, the Voyager probes are almost out of juice. To save energy for further interstellar exploration, mission engineers at JPL deactivated Voyager 1's cosmic ray subsystem experiment on February 25. They will shut down the low-energy charged particle instrument onboard Voyager 2 on March 24. Voyager project scientist Linda Spilker says "Every minute of every day, the Voyagers explore a region where no spacecraft has gone before. That also means every day could be our last. But that day could also bring another interstellar revelation. So, we're pulling out all the stops, doing what we can to make sure Voyagers 1 and 2 continue their trailblazing for the maximum time possible."

Articles: <https://www.space.com/nasa-switches-off-voyager-instruments-to-extend-life-of-the-two-interstellar-spacecraft>

<https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/05/science/voyager-probes-turn-off-instruments/index.html>

Back to Johnston Atoll



Credit: Wikipedia

The U.S. Air Force plans the construction of two landing pads on Johnston Island, a remote atoll in the Pacific Ocean, to support the landing of vehicles under the Rocket Cargo program, an Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) project to harness commercial rockets and reentry capsules for rapid global cargo delivery.

Articles: <https://spacenews.com/air-force-selects-pacific-landing-sites-to-test-space-cargo-deliveries/>

Still a Few Bugs in the System



Credit: SpaceX

A Falcon 9 upper stage was placed in orbit on February 1 after launch from Vandenberg SFB. The burn to place it on course for a controlled reentry over the ocean didn't occur; SpaceX blames a propellant leak. So, it wound up making an uncontrolled reentry on February 19, dropping large pieces in Poland, near the city of Poznań. And a Falcon 9 first stage failed to stick the dronship landing on March 2: "an off-nominal fire in the aft end of the rocket damaged one of the booster's landing legs which resulted in it tipping over."

Article: <https://spacenews.com/propellant-leak-blamed-for-falcon-9-upper-stage-uncontrolled-reentry/>

<https://spacenews.com/falcon-9-booster-lost-after-dronship-landing/>

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/launches-spacecraft/spacex-launches-21-starlink-satellites-in-overnight-falcon-9-launch-loses-booster-after-landing-video>

For Those Keeping Score...

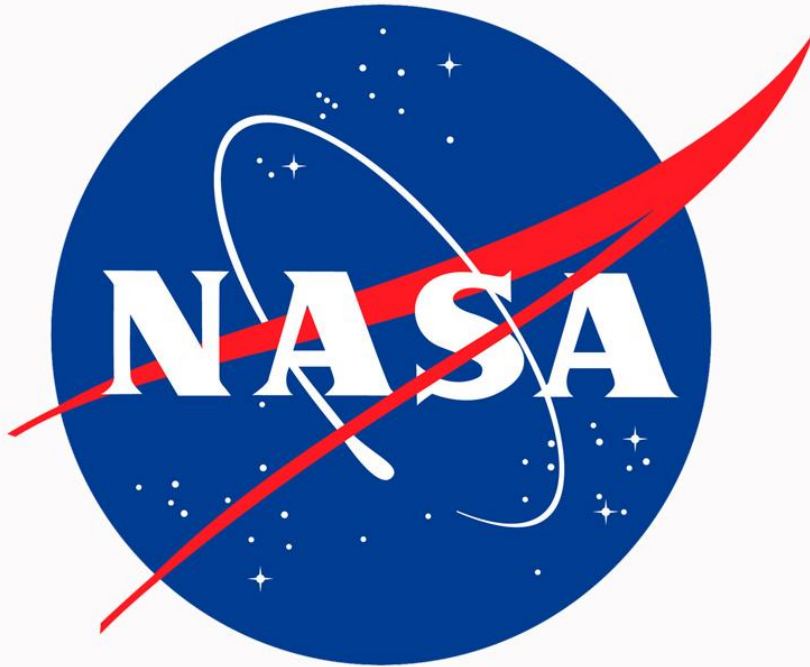


Credit: NASA/Kim Shiflett

Janet Petro is the first woman to head NASA. She's acting administrator until Jared Isaacman gets approved by Congress; no word on when that will be.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/missions/who-is-janet-petro-trumps-pick-for-acting-nasa-administrator>

No Axe Falling...Yet



Credit: NASA

DOGE continues to send shockwave through the federal bureaucracy, but unlike other agencies, none of the 1,000+ probationary NASA employees have been let go yet. And employees were told they could hold off responding to DOGE's request for an email bullet-pointing their accomplishments for the week.

Articles: <https://spacenews.com/doge-to-examine-nasa-payments/>

<https://spacenews.com/house-members-seek-more-details-on-doge-activities-at-nasa/>

<https://spacenews.com/nasa-employees-advised-to-delay-responses-to-what-did-you-do-email/>

<https://spacenews.com/nasa-layoffs-on-hold-for-now/>

<https://www.space.com/the-universe/earth/over-1-000-nasa-employees-saved-from-dismissal-as-trump-downsizes-federal-workforce>

SpaceX is Not the Model



Credit: SpaceX

Investors and startup executives during a panel at the Smallsat Symposium advised startup companies not to compete with SpaceX, or even use it as a business model.

Article: <https://spacenews.com/dont-compete-with-or-emulate-spacex-investors-urge/>

That's All, Folks



Credit: SpaceX