



March 2026

Update

**Oklahoma Space
Alliance**

A Chapter of The
National Space Society

A free email newsletter of the Oklahoma Space Alliance

Back in the VAB



Credit: NASA/Cory S Huston



March 2026 OSA Meeting

Saturday, March 14, 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

"We're baked in everything. If you love cookies and you love brownies, we're actually the flour. You don't see us, but you need us." – Lt. Gen. Gregory Gagnon, head of the Space Force's Combat Forces Command

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Oklahoma Space Alliance

Update

March 14, 2026

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Articles may be submitted by U.S. mail or electronically. Articles may be sent to the Editor at 121 South Creekdale Drive, Norman, OK 73072 or to david.sheely51@gmail.com. Each submission should include the author's name and either e-mail address or phone number (for verification only). A text or Microsoft Word file is preferred. Please contact the Editor by phone, e-mail or texting before mailing your information.

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Another Hangar Queen



Credit: NASA/Ben Smegelsky

More problems with the Slow Launch System. No Apollo 8 reprise until April at the soonest.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/artemis/problem-pops-up-with-artemis-2-moon-rocket-this-will-almost-assuredly-impact-the-march-launch-window>

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/artemis/artemis-2-moon-mission-shouldnt-launch-until-late-2026-new-analysis-of-solar-superflares-suggests>

<https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/03/no-fooling-nasa-targets-april-1-for-artemis-ii-launch-to-the-moon/>

Recalculating



Credit: NASA

Artemis' first moon landing is still targeted for 2028, but not on Artemis 3. That will be an earth orbit only mission to demonstrate rendezvous and docking with one or more lunar landers (both Starship and Blue Moon?). This revision is meant to speed up landing plans, not slow them down. Artemis 4 will now be the first lunar landing, and Artemis 5 may also happen in 2028. NASA has also scrapped all plans to upgrade SLS with a new Exploration Upper Stage; it will use a Centaur V upper stage instead.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/artemis/nasa-cancels-artemis-3-astronaut-moon-landing-this-is-just-not-the-right-pathway-forward>
<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/artemis/pushing-this-competition-spacexs-starship-might-not-fly-on-nasas-newly-revamped-artemis-3-mission>
<https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/02/nasa-shakes-up-its-artemis-program-to-speed-up-lunar-return/>

Heads are Rolling



Credit: NASA

Accountability for the Starliner debacle.

Article: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/human-spaceflight/nasa-shakes-up-leadership-of-human-spaceflight-program-in-wake-of-critical-starliner-report>

<https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/02/nasa-chief-classifies-starliner-flight-as-type-a-mishap-says-agency-made-mistakes/>

Two More Years, At Least



Credit: NASA

Congress officially wants to push ISS retirement out another two years, to 2032. International partners have yet to weigh in.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/human-spaceflight/congress-wants-the-international-space-station-to-keep-flying-until-2032-heres-why>
<https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/03/congress-steps-up-pressure-on-nasa-to-support-private-space-stations/>

That Wasn't Supposed to Happen



Credit: NASA/Johns Hopkins APL/Steve Gribben

The 2022 impact of the DART prob on Didymos, the moonlet of asteroid Dimorphos, changed the orbit of Didymos around its primary in a test of asteroid deflection technology. It worked just as intended. But it did something more; it changed the orbit of Dimorphos around the sun.

Article: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/asteroid-comet-missions/nasas-asteroid-smashing-spacecraft-managed-to-alter-target-space-rocks-orbit-around-the-sun>

<https://www.space.com/space-exploration/asteroid-comet-missions/nasas-dart-planetary-defense-mission-reveals-asteroids-hurling-cosmic-snowballs-at-each-other>

First to Fight

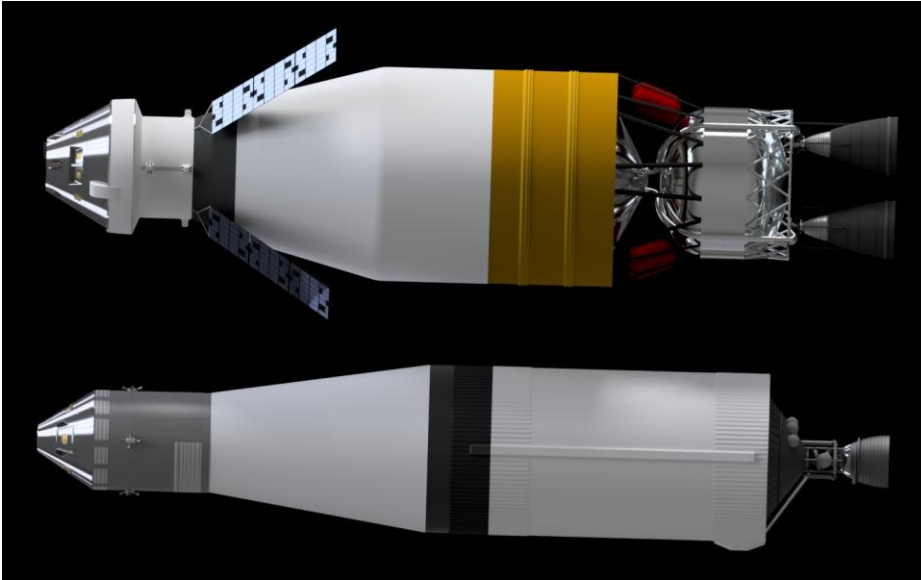


Credit: USSF

Per Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, “The first movers [in the strikes on Iran] were U.S. SPACECOM and U.S. CYBERCOM, layering nonkinetic effects, disrupting and degrading Iran’s ability to see, communicate, and respond.”

Articles: <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/us-space-command-first-movers-iran-strikes/>

Cancelling SLS, One Stage at a Time



Credit: Wikimedia Commons

At least the Exploration Upper Stage, intended as an upgrade to SLS, has been cancelled. SLS will now use Centaur V as an upper stage, starting with Artemis 4.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/artemis/nasa-selects-new-upper-stage-for-sls-moon-rocket-amid-artemis-shakeup>

<https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/03/ding-dong-the-exploration-upper-stage-is-dead/>

<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2026/03/10/united-launch-alliance-tapped-to-provide-replacement-artemis-stages-after-revamp/>

Maybe Science Can Tag Along



Credit: Rocket Lab

NASA's next Mars orbiter will launch no earlier than late 2028, so it's the only large spacecraft that NASA can possibly launch to Mars during the Trump presidency and could be NASA's only major Mars mission for the rest of the decade. The "nonpublic pre-solicitation" specs for the spacecraft show all the priorities are for communications relay capability, but there could be room for a few science instruments.

Article: <https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/02/a-non-public-document-reveals-that-science-may-not-be-prioritized-on-next-mars-mission/>

Bridenstine the Lobbyist?

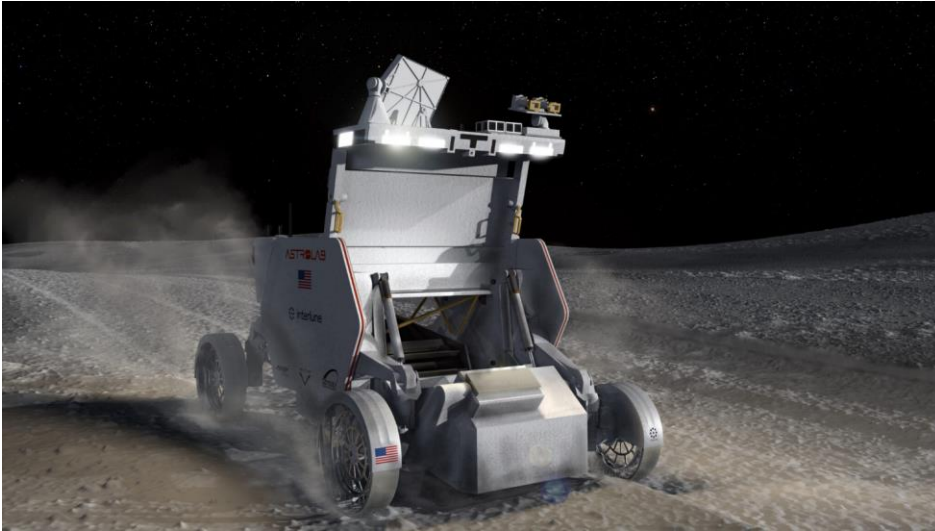


Credit: NASA

Former NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine says he is “encouraged” that the US Congress is considering legislation to prevent NASA from spending more than 50 percent of its launch funding on any single provider. Other observers see the legislation as targeting SpaceX. Bridenstine’s consulting firm, The Artemis Group, purely by coincidence netted \$990,000 from ULA in 2025.

Articles: <https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/03/former-nasa-chief-turned-ula-lobbyist-seeks-law-to-limit-spacex-funding/>

Harvest the Moon

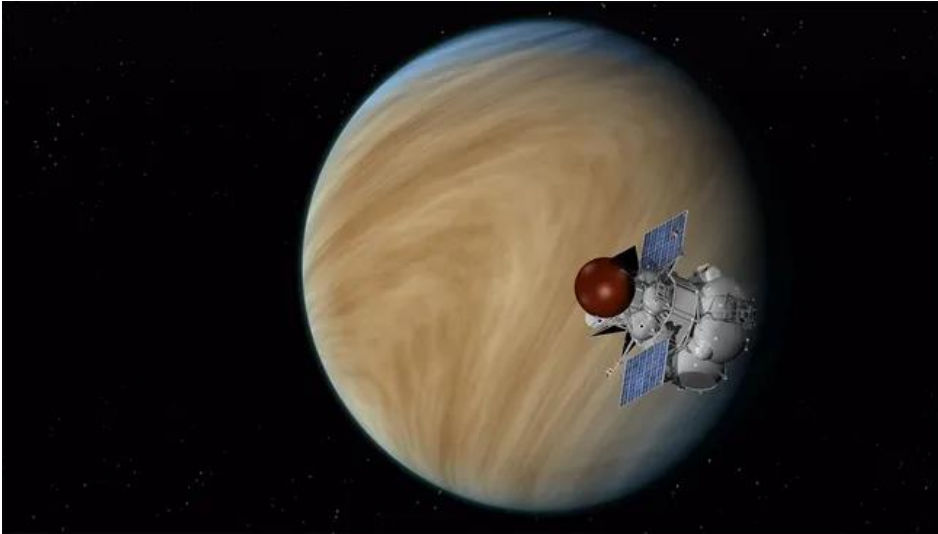


Credit: Astrolab

And two lunar startups, Astrolab and Interlune, announced in February that they are forming a partnership to develop a lunar regolith harvester based on Astrolab's FLEX rover.

Article: <https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/03/as-moon-interest-heats-up-two-companies-unveil-plans-for-a-lunar-harvester/>

We'll Believe It When We See It



Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

Before they burned all their bridges with the international science community, the Russians were considering Venera-D as a joint mission with NASA. Now that they've isolated themselves, they say they plan to forge ahead alone, targeting a launch in 2036. India will probably get there first, to say nothing of three U.S. missions in the works.

Article: <https://www.space.com/astronomy/venus/russia-aims-to-reclaim-soviet-space-glory-with-2036-launch-of-ambitious-venus-mission>

\$500M Raise



Credit: Vast

Vast just raised another \$500M to continue development of its commercial space stations.

Article: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/human-spaceflight/vast-500-million-dollars-funding-haven-private-space-stations>

Third Time Wasn't the Charm

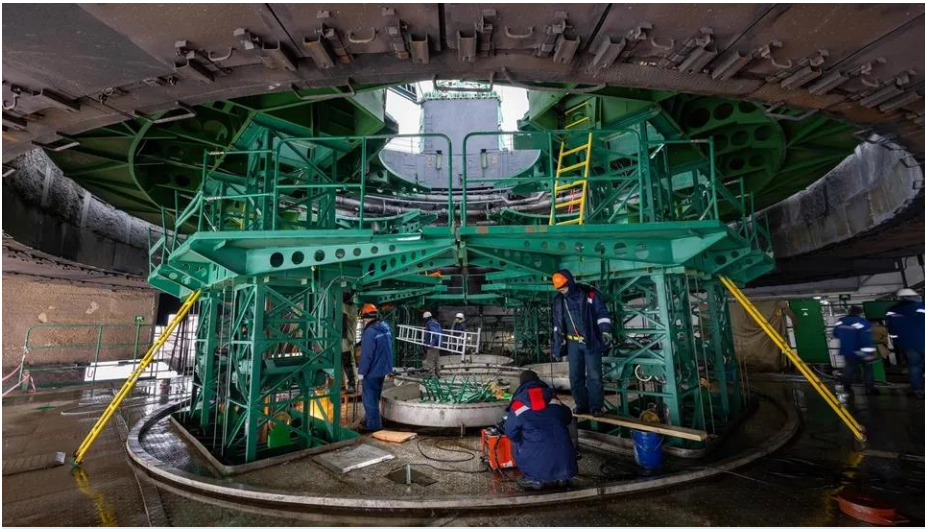


Credit: Space One

The March 4 launch of the Kairos rocket, built by Japan's private firm Space One, wasn't any more successful than the first two.

Article: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/private-spaceflight/japan-startup-space-one-kairos-third-launch>

Promises, Promises



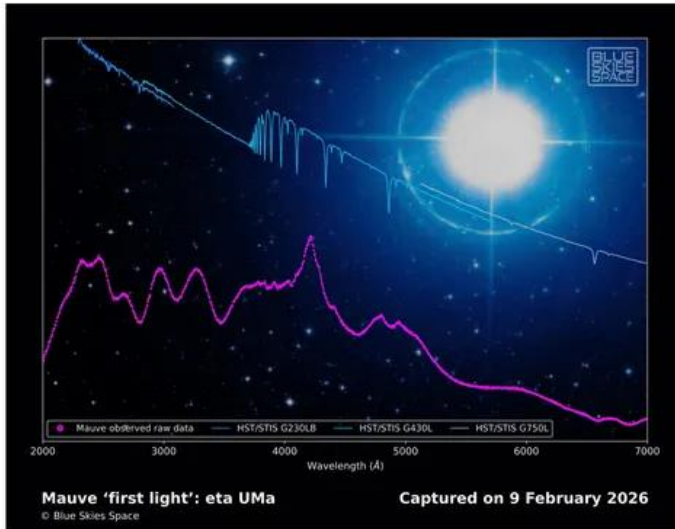
Credit: Roscosmos

Russia says they'll have their damaged launch pad ready to launch humans to ISS again by Thanksgiving.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/international-space-station/russia-fixes-launch-pad-damaged-by-thanksgiving-astronaut-launch-to-the-international-space-station>

Commented [U1]:

Space-based Astronomy Goes Private

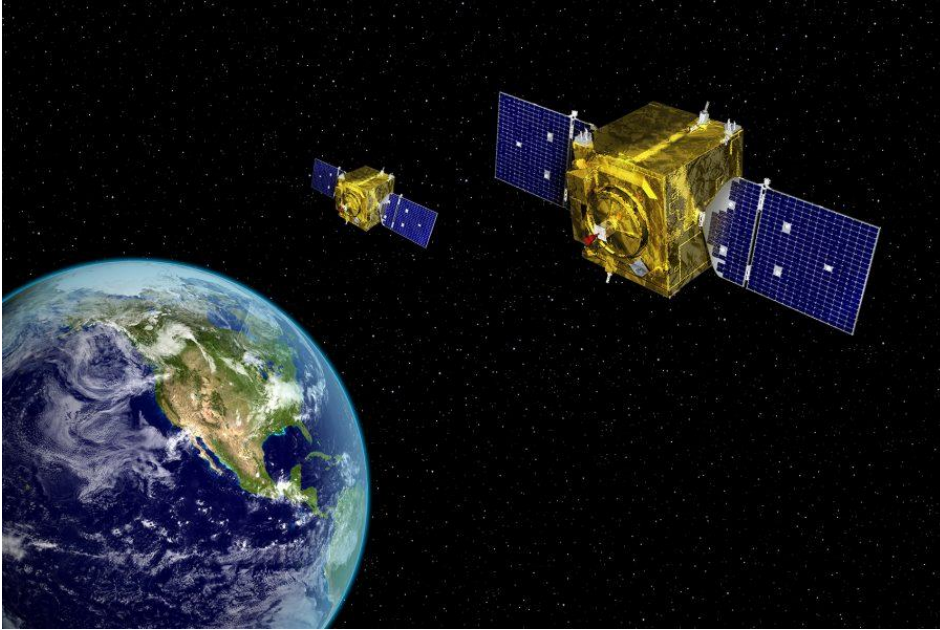


Credit: ESA/Blue Skies Space

The world's first commercial space telescope is now operational. Mauve, a suitcase-sized satellite launched last November, released its first image of a star.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/astronomy/exoplanets/the-worlds-1st-private-space-telescope-just-spotted-its-1st-star-heres-what-it-saw>

Practice, Practice, Practice



Credit: USAF

Guardians in the Space Force's orbital warfare unit, Mission Delta 9, just got a dedicated live satellite, which they'll use to practice advanced offensive and defensive maneuvers for space warfighting.

Article: <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/orbital-warfighting-live-satellite-maneuver-practice/>

Commented [U2]:

Chris Hadfield Has Competition





Credit: Astroscale

The taikonauts aboard Tiangong filmed a music video to celebrate the Lunar New Year.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/astronomy/moon/chinese-astronauts-celebrate-lunar-new-year-2026-by-filming-music-video-on-tiangong-space-station>

That's All, Folks



Credit: NASA/ESA