



May 2026

Update

**Oklahoma Space
Alliance**

A Chapter of The
National Space Society

A free email newsletter of the Oklahoma Space Alliance

Artemis 2 Looks Homeward



Credit: NASA



May 2026 OSA Meeting

Saturday, May 9, 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

"American exceptionalism is being challenged in the high ground of space. To win, we cannot establish programs that are designed to be too big to fail but at the same time too costly to succeed. Nor should it be throwing more money at the problem, but rather fixing the problems and concentrating resources on the mission and delivering outcomes."— NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman

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Oklahoma Space Alliance Update

May 9, 2026

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Success Mingled With Failure



Credit: Adam Bernstein/Spaceflight Now.

On April 19, Blue Origin's New Glenn flew for the third time. It was the first time for reuse of a first stage, and that stage was again recovered successfully. But the Bluebird-7 satellite it carried was deployed in too low an orbit and will have to be deorbited.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/launches-spacecraft/blue-origin-reuses-new-glenn-rocket-landing-success-1st-time-on-april-19-2026-video>

<https://spaceflightnow.com/2026/04/20/blue-origin-launches-third-new-glenn-rocket-but-payload-ends-up-in-wrong-orbit/>

<https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/04/errant-upper-stage-spoils-blue-origins-success-in-reusing-new-glenn-booster/>

“Critical to Mission Success”



Credit: USSF

"We aren't just talking about theories or plans anymore. We're talking about real operational combat, space effects and the Guardians who deliver them." General Chance Saltzman, Chief of Space Operations (CSO) for the U.S. Space Force, told Space Foundation's 41st Space Symposium that the U.S. Space Force has demonstrated "combat space power at work" throughout the war in Iran. Meanwhile, we learn that the IRGC's Aerospace Force (who knew they had one?) has acquired a Chinese satellite to do their own countersurveillance,

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/satellites/space-combat-was-critical-to-mission-success-in-us-war-in-iran-space-force-chief-says>
www.ndtv.com/world-news/iran-used-chinese-spy-satellite-to-track-us-bases-during-war-report-11363335

The Nearer Your Destination...



Credit: SpaceX

“...the more you slip slidin’ away.” When NASA announced in late February that Artemis 3 would be changing from a lunar landing attempt to an Apollo 9-redux, testing one or both lunar landers in earth orbit, the target date for that launch was “no earlier than March, no later than June” of 2027. But when NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman testified before the subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee responsible for NASA’s budget on April 27, just two months later, he told the legislators that both SpaceX and Blue Origin tell him they won’t be ready before late 2027.

Article: <https://spacenews.com/artemis-3-plans-remain-uncertain-as-schedule-slips/>

<https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/04/put-it-in-pencil-nasas-artemis-iii-mission-will-launch-no-earlier-than-late-2027/>

Ambition – Not a Bad Thing

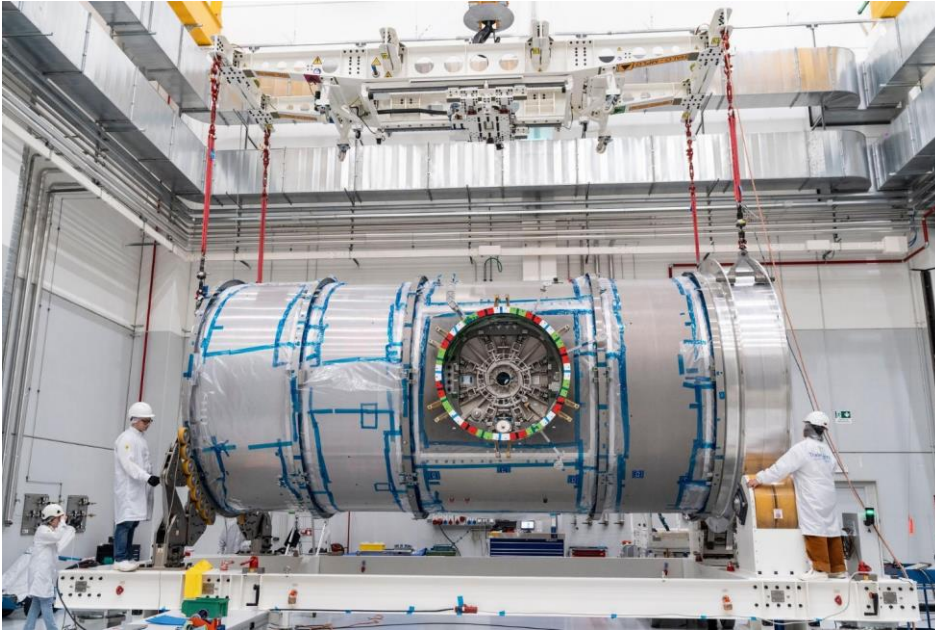


Credit: NASA

Blue Origin's production target for the second stage of the 9x4 New Glenn upgrade indicates that they want to be flying 100 times per year by 2029.

Articles: <https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/04/blue-origin-certainly-has-ambitious-launch-targets-for-new-glenn/>

Try Explaining This



Credit: Thales Alenia

Before either of them got anywhere near launch, we discovered that both the HALO and I-HAB modules of the Gateway are corroded.

Article: <https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/04/gateway-manufacturer-finally-acknowledges-issue-fails-to-mention-corrosion/>

<https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/04/well-this-is-embarrassing-the-lunar-gateways-primary-modules-are-corroded/>

It's Good to Be King



Credit: Elon Musk Facebook page

SpaceX's IPO filing specifies that only Elon Musk can remove himself as CEO or chairman of the board. And the SpaceX board has approved a compensation plan for Elon that ties his pay directly to colonizing Mars and building data centers in outer space. But the peasants are revolting...

Articles: <https://www.reuters.com/world/only-elon-musk-can-fire-elon-musk-spacex-filing-shows-2026-04-29/>

<https://www.teslarati.com/spacex-elon-musk-compensation-bonus-colonize-mars/>

<https://www.wired.com/story/activists-call-for-boycott-of-spacex-ipo/>

Slap Them Around Until They Apologize



Credit: California Coastal Commission

Elon Musk's lawsuit against the California Coastal Commission has been settled with an on-the-record apology to SpaceX. As part of the settlement, the Commission acknowledged its members made "improper" statements about Musk's political beliefs at a 2024 hearing on SpaceX's Falcon 9 launch program.

Articles: <https://apnews.com/article/california-coastal-commission-spacex-elon-musk-33065c34cc0555faa91ca2571924e4b3>

It Was Inevitable

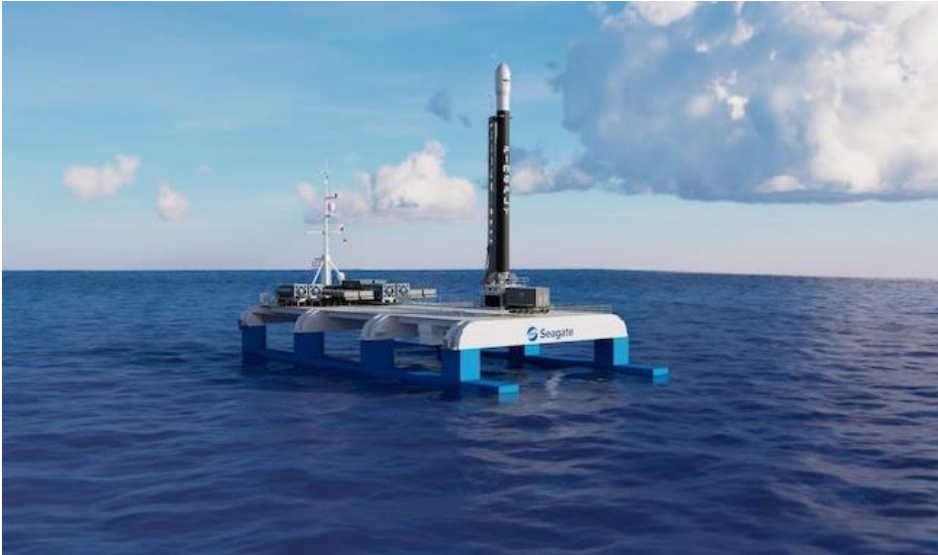


Credit: SpaceX

There will be a freight charge to orbit, coming soon. In a recent notice, the FAA announced it will begin including terms and conditions that outline fee assessment and collection procedures for future licenses and permits issued by the administration. Initial fee appears to be \$0.25/lb of payload.

Articles: <https://gizmodo.com/feds-will-start-charging-companies-like-spacex-for-rocket-launches-2000751349>

Firefly Goes to Sea



Credit: Firefly Aerospace/Seagate Space

On May 4, Jonathan Caldwell, vice-president and general manager of Lockheed Martin's Strategic and Missile Defense Systems, announced on LinkedIn that his company is partnering with Firefly Aerospace and Seagate Space to launch Firefly's Alpha rocket from Seagate's ocean-based launch platform.

Article: <https://spaceflightnow.com/2026/05/04/lockheed-martin-announces-collaboration-with-firefly-aerospace-and-seagate-for-off-shore-launches/>

Bridenstine's New Job



Credit: Bill Ingalls/NASA

Former NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine was named the new CEO of Quantum Space on May 5. Maryland-based Quantum Space is pretty new; it was founded in 2021. The company aims to become a major player in commercial and military space with its forthcoming Ranger spacecraft, due to debut next year.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/satellites/former-nasa-chief-jim-bridenstine-takes-over-as-ceo-of-quantum-space>

<https://arstechnica.com/space/2026/05/former-nasa-chief-takes-helm-of-national-security-space-firm/>

To Infinity and Beyond!



Credit: KOCO

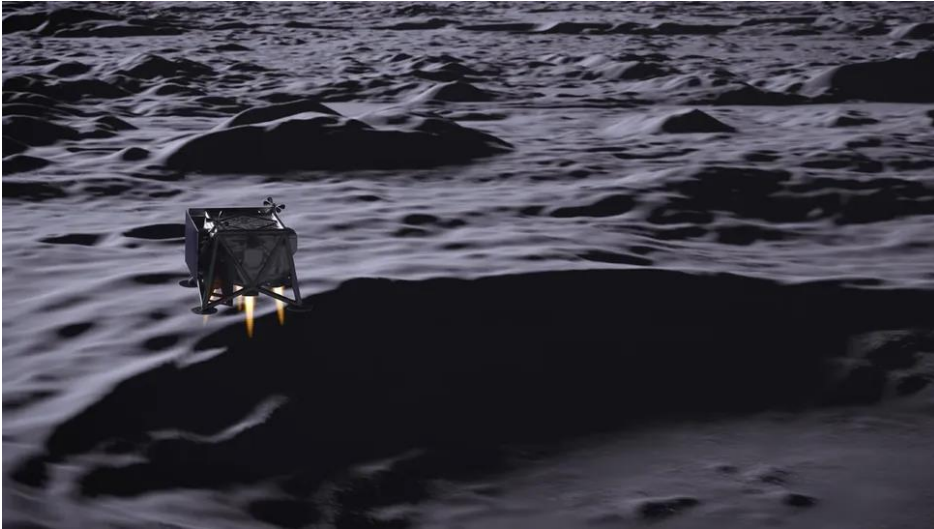
The Oklahoma Spaceport was renamed Infinity One Oklahoma Spaceport on April 16. To kickstart Dawn Aerospace's business at the spaceport, the state is offering 25 free flights, valued at \$5M, to Oklahoma research institutes. Applications for researchers will run through September 25.

Article: <https://www.koco.com/article/burns-flat-spaceport-renamed-infinity-one-set-to-launch-reusable-spaceplane/71042342>

<https://www.okenergytoday.com/2026/04/first-of-its-kind-spaceplane-challenge-in-oklahoma/>

<https://www.foxnews.com/tech/runway-space-challenge-brings-spaceflight-closer>

The More the Merrier



Credit: NASA/JPL

Among the announcements at NASA's "Ignition" event on March 24 was a plan to put a lot more robotic probes on the moon in the next few years. Part of that effort will be use of four hopper drones to scout the lunar south pole region, under what's called MoonFall. An RFP for moving MoonFall forward was issued the day of the NASA Ignition event.

Article: <https://www.space.com/astronomy/moon/nasa-wants-to-use-a-fleet-of-moonfall-drones-to-scout-the-lunar-south-pole-we-believe-we-can-do-it>

Golden Dome Takes Shape



Credit: USAF/Eric Dietrich)

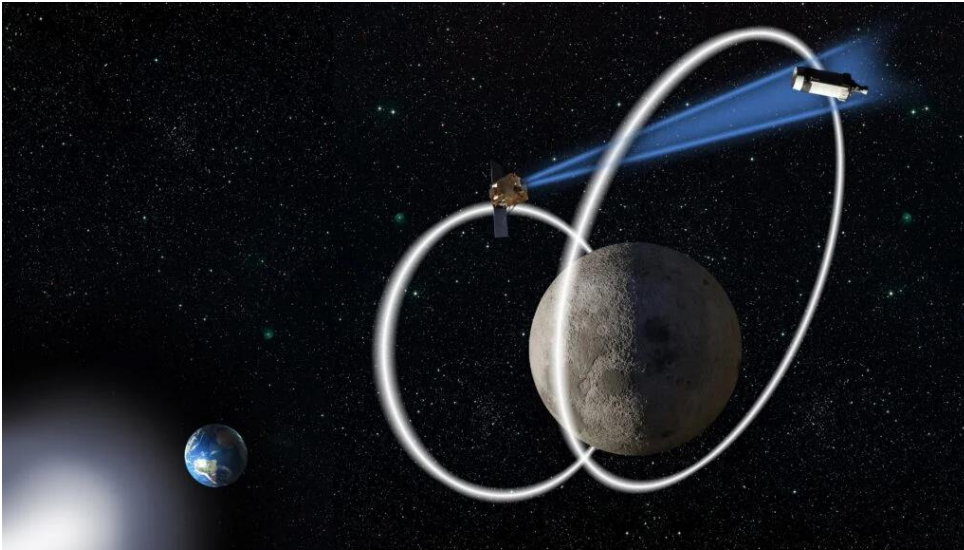
Golden Dome program manager Gen. Michael Guetlein told reporters recently “The most important message I can give to you today is that Golden Dome is real, and it is no longer theoretical.” \$17B is budgeted for Golden Dome in Fy '27, with first interceptors slated to be on orbit within two years. On April 24, Space Force announced that 20 contracts totaling \$3.2B have been awarded to 12 companies over the last several months, to help construct a proliferated LEO “constellation of interceptors capable of boost, midcourse and glide phase engagements.”

Articles: <https://breakingdefense.com/2026/04/space-force-tasks-a-dozen-companies-for-golden-dome-space-based-interceptors/>

<https://breakingdefense.com/2026/04/golden-dome-guetlein-show-the-public-norfolk/>

Commented [U1]:

They'll Be There



Credit: AFRL

“Wherever US interests go, so will go the US Space Force. If our interests go to a lunar base, the Space Force will have to make sure that it’s safe to get out there, it’s secure once they’re there [and] it’s sustainable,” says Chief of Space Operations General Chance Saltzman “We’re going to stand up a Cislunar Coordination Office on the Space Force acquisition side,” says Major General Stephen Purdy, senior advisor to Air Force Secretary Troy Mink for space acquisition.

Articles: <https://breakingdefense.com/2026/04/with-eyes-on-future-nasa-moon-base-space-force-launches-cislunar-acquisition-task-force/>

<https://www.space.com/astronomy/moon/could-the-moon-be-the-next-strait-of-hormuz>

Nonpartisan?



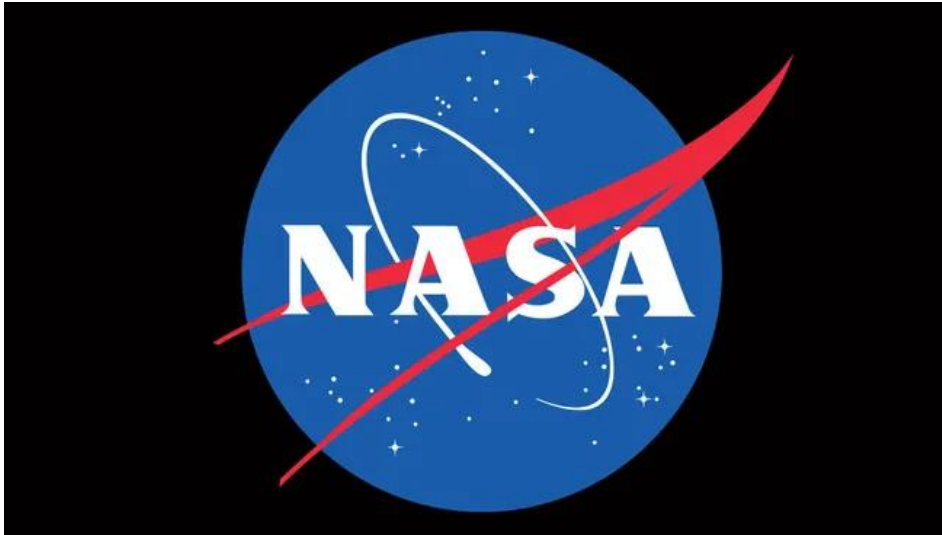
Credit: Astronauts For America

We'll see. On April 21, a group of 103 former NASA astronauts announced the formation of Astronauts for America. Their organization plans to release candidate scorecards that educate voters, support sound leadership, and hold leaders accountable when they ignore the Constitution and the rule of law. They say they will also meet directly with federal policymakers to advocate for evidence-based leadership and for Congress to exercise its constitutional authority.

Article: <https://nasawatch.com/activism/over-100-former-nasa-astronauts-launch-astronauts-for-america-to-uphold-the-constitution/>

Website: <https://www.astronautsforamerica.org/>

NASA Force!



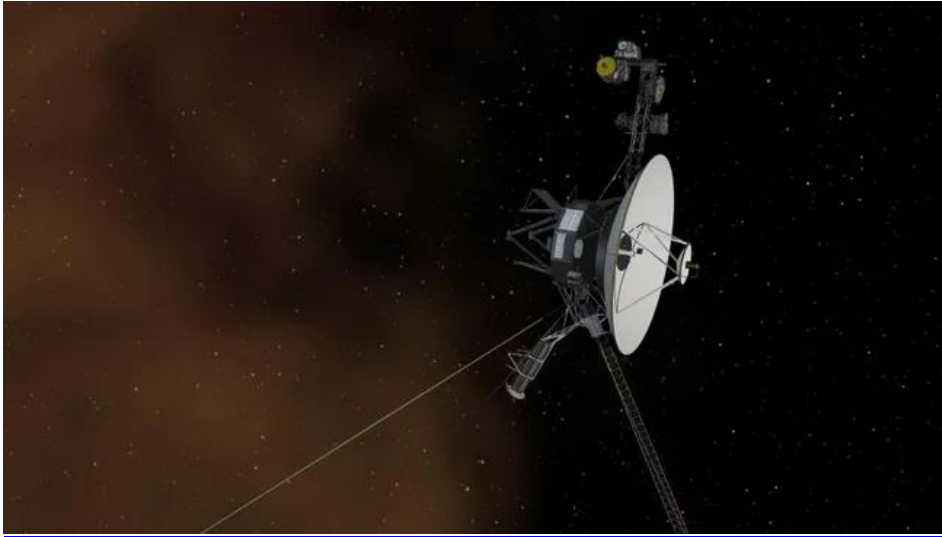
Credit: NASA

Isaacman wants some new blood in his workforce. NASA has launched a new website called NASA Force to "recruit and place high-impact technical talent into mission-critical roles."

Article: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/youve-heard-of-the-space-force-now-theres-a-nasa-force-but-its-not-about-making-space-war>

Commented [U2]:

Life Extension



Credit: NASA

At 15 billion miles out, Voyager 1 is the most distant man-made object from earth. But as its RTG runs out of power, scientists were forced to shut down its Low-energy Charged Particles experiment to keep it going. There may be a workaround to bring more instruments back online.

Articles: <https://www.space.com/space-exploration/nasa-shuts-down-voyager-1-instrument-to-keep-probe-exploring-interstellar-space>

<https://www.cnn.com/2026/04/27/science/voyager-1-big-bang>

That's All, Folks



Credit: NASA