



Dawn Mission Outreach E-News, 8th Edition

March 2006

A MESSAGE FROM THE DAWN TEAM

Suspense has reigned during the first quarter of 2006 for the Dawn mission. If you received the last e-newsletter in January, you know that the Dawn mission team was asked to cease all work except that which was critical to maintaining the viability of the Dawn mission. During this time, a review was conducted by the Independent Assessment Team (IAT) and a decision was made to cancel the mission on March 2nd. Several days later, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory appealed the cancellation decision, and a panel comprised of the Chief Engineer, the Chief of Safety and Mission Assurance, and the Assistant Administrator for Program Analysis and Evaluation met to further examine the decision process, the IAT's findings, and JPL's appeal.

With regard to the technical concerns involving the spacecraft design, fuel tank, and ion propulsion power unit, the review panel concluded that such concerns "have been resolved or a credible resolution path exists." We are pleased to announce that NASA reinstated the Dawn mission on Monday, March 27th. The mission is moving forward with a scheduled launch in the summer of 2007. Because of Dawn's ion propulsion system, this delayed launch will not impact the spacecraft's arrival at Vesta in 2011 and Ceres in 2015.

We invite you to stay up-to-date with the Dawn mission by visiting our Web site at:
<http://dawn.jpl.nasa.gov>.

A GREEN LIGHT FOR DAWN

NASA Associate Administrator Rex Geveden, who chaired the review panel, explains, "Our review determined the project team has made substantive progress on many of this mission's technical issues, and, in the end, we have confidence the mission will succeed." Learn more about NASA's decision to reinstate the Dawn mission:

http://www.nasa.gov/home/hqnews/2006/mar/HQ_06108_Dawn_reinstates.html

SEND YOUR NAME TO THE ASTEROID BELT

If you haven't climbed aboard the Dawn spacecraft yet, here's another chance to virtually travel to the Asteroid Belt. Include your name on a microchip that will accompany Dawn on its journey to Vesta and Ceres. All previous submissions have been saved to the microchip, so there's no need to reenter your name. First-timers can climb aboard by simply going to:

http://dawn.jpl.nasa.gov/DawnCommunity/Sendname2asteroid/index_asteroid_blt.aspx

NOTE: Once you have entered your name, a certificate will appear. Remember to hit the "Print" button, as this is your only opportunity to print your "name onboard" verification.

UPCOMING EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EVENT

Dawn Education and Public Outreach (E/PO) staff will exhibit and present at the National Science Teachers Association Convention in Anaheim, California during April 6-9. E/PO team member Jacinta Behne will present "Science Through Fiction," featuring the Dawn story *The Aster's Hoity-Toity Belt*. Mission information and educational materials will be available at both the NASA and McREL booths. For more information about this national convention, visit:

http://www.nsta.org/conventiondetail&Meeting_Code=2006ANA

ASK A SCIENTIST

Have a question and want to communicate directly with a member of the Dawn mission team? Click on the "Ask a Scientist" link located at the bottom of the Dawn Web site at:

<http://dawn.jpl.nasa.gov>

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

Continually seeking ways to improve the mission Web site, Dawn Education and Public Outreach is eager to receive your feedback. Please share your thoughts by completing a brief survey at:

<http://survey.mcREL.org/external/dawn/website505.htm>

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Please forward this e-mail to share with others interested in NASA missions. New subscribers may join the Dawn mission e-news mailing list on our Web site at:

http://dawn.jpl.nasa.gov/DawnMedia/e_news.asp

Dawn Mission Outreach E-News features information about the mission, its outreach Web site, and products, services, and materials available from the Dawn Education and Public Outreach (E/PO) team. Dawn is the ninth Discovery mission in NASA's Science Mission Directorate and is a collaborative partnership made up of the University of California, Los Angeles; Jet Propulsion Laboratory; Orbital Sciences Corporation; Los Alamos National Laboratory; German Aerospace Center; Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research; Italian Space Agency; and Italian National Institute of Astrophysics. Dawn outreach materials are developed under contract by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), Denver, CO



NEWS RELEASES

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NASA Reinstates the Dawn Mission

NASA senior management announced a decision Monday to reinstate the Dawn mission, a robotic exploration of two major asteroids. Dawn had been canceled because of technical problems and cost overruns.

The mission, named because it was designed to study objects dating from the dawn of the solar system, would travel to Vesta and Ceres, two of the largest asteroids orbiting the sun between Mars and Jupiter. Dawn will use an electric ion propulsion system and orbit multiple objects.

The mission originally was approved in December 2001 and was set for launch in June 2006. Technical problems and other difficulties delayed the projected launch date to July 2007 and pushed the cost from its original estimate of \$373 million to \$446 million. The decision to cancel Dawn was made March 2, 2006, after about \$257 million already had been spent. An additional expenditure of about \$14 million would have been required to terminate the project.

The reinstatement resulted from a review process that is part of new management procedures established by NASA Administrator Michael Griffin. The process is intended to help ensure open debate and thorough evaluation of major decisions regarding space exploration and agency operations.

"We revisited a number of technical and financial challenges and the work being done to address them," said NASA Associate Administrator Rex Geveden, who chaired the review panel. "Our review determined the project team has made substantive progress on many of this mission's technical issues, and, in the end, we have confidence the mission will succeed."

The Dawn decision document will be available on the Web at:

<http://www.nasa.gov/formedia>

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