

## **NASA Extends Kepler Mission Through 2016**

### **Ball Aerospace Kepler Photometer Continues Search for Habitable Planets**

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BOULDER, Colo., April 5, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- The Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. Kepler Mission for NASA will continue its mission following a program extension through 2016.

(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20120405/LA83355>)

Ball Aerospace is the mission prime contractor for Kepler, designed to search for Earth-size planets around other stars. Ball Aerospace built the photometer and spacecraft, and managed system integration and test for the NASA Ames Research Center and Jet Propulsion Laboratory-led Discovery class mission. Ball is currently managing on-orbit operation of the satellite for NASA Ames.

The extension will allow Kepler to continue its already successful search, four years past the original end-date of November 2012. The additional observation time means Kepler will be able to determine what fraction of stars host Earth-size planets in our galaxy. The extended mission will also allow Kepler to search for planets in longer period orbits, like Earth, in the habitable zones, the region in the planetary system where liquid water could exist. Kepler has identified more than 2,300 candidate planets and more than 900 are smaller than twice the size of Earth. Of the 46 planet candidates found in the habitable zone, 10 of these candidates are near-Earth-size.

"The Kepler mission has proven to be a terrific return on the nation's investment and the extension will further our scientific understanding of other solar systems in our galaxy," said Cary Ludtke, vice president and general manager for the Ball Aerospace Civil and Operational Space business unit.

The Kepler mission is the 2012 recipient of three awards from the aerospace community:

- Space Foundation John L. "Jack" Swigert Award for Space Exploration
- Aviation Week & Space Technology Laureate Award for Space
- National Space Club Nelson P. Jackson Aerospace Award

Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. supports critical missions for national agencies such as the Department of Defense, NASA, NOAA and other U.S. government and commercial entities. The company develops and manufactures spacecraft, advanced instruments and sensors, components, data exploitation systems and RF solutions for strategic, tactical and scientific applications. For more information visit [www.ballaerospace.com](http://www.ballaerospace.com).

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### **Forward-Looking Statements**

This release contains "forward-looking" statements concerning future events and financial performance. Words such as "expects," "anticipates," "estimates" and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-

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