

Ball Aerospace Ships ICESat to Vandenberg Air Force Base

PRNewswire
BOULDER, Colo.

Following completion of mechanical and electrical integration, Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. shipped the Ice, Cloud, and Land Elevation Satellite (ICESat) to NASA at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., Oct. 22 in preparation for a winter launch.

Ball Aerospace built the ICESat spacecraft bus, based on its BCP 2000, also used for the QuikSCAT mission. The BCP 2000, assembled in Boulder, has demonstrated its exceptional capabilities in attitude control accuracy, real-time attitude knowledge precision and spacecraft jitter control.

ICESat is designed to detect the height of the Earth's polar ice masses, and from this determine changes in the amount of water stored in the polar deep freeze. These changes are major factors in global sea level change and understanding them is key to predicting future changes in the Earth's climate.

The payload consists of the Geoscience Laser Altimeter System (GLAS), and a precision on-board GPS. GLAS, a next-generation space-lidar, was designed and built at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center.

"The ICESat team is delighted that testing has confirmed ICESat is ready for the pre-launch process," said Zubin Emsley, ICESat program manager. "The ICESat mission is unique because its laser altimeter will soon be measuring the changes in ice thickness over millions of locations in both Greenland and Antarctica. The data collected will establish a baseline on ice balance and help determine if greenhouse warming is becoming more significant."

Ball Aerospace was awarded the contract for ICESat under NASA's Rapid Spacecraft Development program. ICESat's operations following launch will be handled under a Ball Aerospace subcontract to the University of Colorado's Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics.

Image available at: <http://www.ball.com/aerospace/media/images/icesat.html>

Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. provides imaging and communications products for commercial and government customers worldwide and is a subsidiary of Ball Corporation, a Fortune 500 company which had sales of \$3.7 billion in 2001.

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