

Ball Aerospace's Deep Impact Spacecraft Headed to Comet Hartley 2

PRNewswire-FirstCall
BOULDER, Colo.

The flyby spacecraft built for the successful Deep Impact Mission by Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. has been funded by NASA to embark on a new mission to encounter comet Hartley 2 on October 11, 2010.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20071214/LAF035>)

The Deep Impact Extended Investigation (DIXI), and the Extrasolar Planet Observations and Characterization (EPOCH), together known as the EPOXI mission, will support two goals: the DIXI mission will send the flyby spacecraft to investigate the surface of comet Hartley 2; and while en route, the EPOCH mission will engage the larger of the spacecraft's two telescopes to search for small planets around stars with already discovered large planets.

Deep Impact accomplished its first successful mission on July 4, 2005, when the flyby spacecraft released its impactor spacecraft to create the historic encounter with Comet Tempel 1. The flyby spacecraft then skillfully maneuvered away from the comet's debris and has since been orbiting around the sun, awaiting its next assignment.

"We are gratified that Ball's successful architecture for the Deep Impact mission allows NASA to task our viable flyby spacecraft to pursue additional scientific discoveries for a fraction of the cost of a new mission," said Cary Ludtke, Ball Aerospace vice president and general manager of the Civil and Operational Space business unit.

Ball Aerospace will interface with Michael A'Hearn, EPOXI principal investigator and DIXI science team lead; L. Drake Deming, EPOXI's deputy principal investigator and EPOCH investigation lead; and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory which provides project management.

NASA had initially planned to send the spacecraft to comet Boethin in December 2009, but astronomers at multiple observatories could not locate the comet in time for the planned flyby of Earth. Scientists theorize comet Boethin may have broken up into pieces too small for detection. NASA then elected to send the Deep Impact flyby to a backup target, comet Hartley 2, (which will occur on New Year's Eve) with the relevant maneuver executed on November 1, 2007.

NASA's Discovery missions of opportunity are cost-capped solar system exploration missions with highly focused scientific goals. The DIXI mission is designed to provide additional information on how comets were formed and evolved. It would employ both the Ball Aerospace-built Medium Resolution (MRI) and the High Resolution Imagers (HRI) extensively, as well as the onboard spectrometer. The EPOCH investigation also will use Deep Impact's HRI to observe stars, watching as the giant planets, already known to be orbiting the stars, pass in front of and then behind them. The collected data will be used to characterize the planets and to determine whether they possess rings, moons, or Earth-sized planetary companions. EPOCH's sensitivity will exceed both current ground- and space-based observatory capabilities. EPOCH also will measure the Earth's mid-infrared spectrum, providing comparative data for future efforts to study the atmospheres of extrasolar planets.

Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. supports critical missions of important 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. Over the past 50 years, Ball Aerospace has been responsible for numerous technological and scientific 'firsts' and acts as a technology innovator for the aerospace market.

Ball Corporation is a supplier of high-quality metal and plastic packaging products for beverage, food and household products customers, and of aerospace and other technologies and services, primarily for the U.S. government. Ball Corporation and its subsidiaries employ more than 15,500 people worldwide and reported 2006 sales of \$6.6 billion.

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-looking statements. Such statements are subject to risks and uncertainties which could cause actual results to differ materially from those expressed or implied. The company undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Key risks and uncertainties are summarized in filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including Exhibit 99.2 in our Form 10-K, which are available at our Web site and at <http://www.sec.gov/>. Factors that might affect our packaging segments include fluctuation in product demand and preferences; availability and cost of raw materials, including recent significant increases in resin, steel, aluminum and energy costs, and the ability to pass such increases on to customers; competitive packaging availability, pricing and substitution; changes in climate and weather; crop yields; competitive activity; failure to achieve anticipated productivity improvements or production cost reductions, including our beverage can end project; mandatory deposit or other restrictive packaging laws; changes in major customer or supplier

contracts or loss of a major customer or supplier; and changes in foreign exchange rates, tax rates and activities of foreign subsidiaries. Factors that might affect our aerospace segment include: funding, authorization, availability and returns of government and commercial contracts; and delays, extensions and technical uncertainties affecting segment contracts. Factors that might affect the company as a whole include those listed plus: accounting changes; successful or unsuccessful acquisitions, joint ventures or divestitures; integration of recently acquired businesses; regulatory action or laws including tax, environmental and workplace safety; governmental investigations; technological developments and innovations; goodwill impairment; antitrust, patent and other litigation; strikes; labor cost changes; rates of return projected and earned on assets of the company's defined benefit retirement plans; pension changes; reduced cash flow; interest rates affecting our debt; and changes to unaudited results due to statutory audits or other effects.

First Call Analyst:

FCMN Contact: rbrown@ball.com

Photo: NewsCom: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20071214/LAF035>

AP Archive: <http://photoarchive.ap.org/>

AP PhotoExpress Network: PRN8

PRN Photo Desk, photodesk@prnewswire.com

SOURCE: Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp.

CONTACT: Roz Brown of Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp.,
+1-303-533-6059, rbrown@ball.com

Web site: <http://www.ballaerospace.com/>

<https://ball.mediaroom.com/2007-12-14-Ball-Aerospaces-Deep-Impact-Spacecraft-Headed-to-Comet-Hartley-2>