Ball Aerospace Contributes to Instruments for NASA/ESA Mars Mission

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BOULDER, Colo., Sept. 22 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. will have a significant role on two of the five science instruments that will fly aboard the ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO), a European-built spacecraft slated for launch to Mars in March 2016. The orbiter is a joint effort between NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) to explore Mars in future decades.

Ball Aerospace will provide the focal plane and electronics for the High Resolution Stereo Color Imager (HiSCI), and perform instrument system design and test. This is the second collaborative effort to build a Mars camera by Ball Aerospace, the University of Arizona (Alfred McEwen, principal investigator), and the University ofBern, Switzerland, which also teamed on the successful High-Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) aboard the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO). Since its launch in 2005, HiRISE has completed more than 17,000 observations for MRO and continues to return the highest resolution orbital images available of the Red Planet. Images from HiSCI will have a scale of 2 m/pixel rather than the 0.3 m/pixel of HiRISE, but will provide much greater coverage in color and in stereo.

For a second instrument to launch in 2016, the Mars Atmosphere Trace Molecule Occultation Spectrometer (MATMOS), Ball Aerospace will build the cryogenic radiator and detector system under contract to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and principal investigator Paul Wennberg. The integrated cryogenic radiator and detector system is highly leveraged off the Ball-built, Canadian Space Agency's Atmospheric Chemistry Experiment (ACE) system, which has been on-orbit since 2003.

"Ball Aerospace is very pleased to have two roles on NASA's first joint mission to Mars with ESA," saidDavid L. Taylor, Ball Aerospace president and CEO. "We have a long history of building instruments to study Mars dating back to the Viking orbiters in the 1970s, to the rovers Spirit and Opportunity and most recently the very successful HiRISE camera."

The ExoMars Orbiter will study the chemical makeup of the Red Planet's atmosphere with a thousand times more sensitivity than previous Mars orbiters, focusing particularly on methane and its Martian origins, which could indicate the existence of life on Mars.

The launch of HiSCI and MATMOS aboard the ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter is the first of three future robotic missions between NASA and ESA to explore Mars. The collaboration consists of missions in 2016 and 2018, leading to a Mars sample-return mission in the 2020s.

The three other instruments to launch in 2016 include the ExoMars Climate Sounder; the High Resolution Solar Occultation and Nadir Spectrometer; and the Mars Atmospheric Global Imaging Experiment.

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. For more information visit www.ballaerospace.com.

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Forward-Looking Statements

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