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NASA To Preview April Flight Of Space Shuttle Discovery

HOUSTON -- NASA will preview the next space shuttle mission during a series of news briefings on Tuesday, March 9, at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. NASA Television and the agency's Web site will broadcast the briefings live. Reporters will be able to ask questions from participating NASA locations.

The STS-131 mission, targeted for launch April 5, will be shuttle Discovery's next-to-last flight and deliver critical spare parts and cargo to the International Space Station. A multipurpose logistics module will be carried inside the shuttle's payload bay and temporarily attached to the station during the mission. The cargo carrier will be brought back with the

shuttle. Following STS-131, only three more shuttle flights are scheduled.

Alan Poindexter will serve as the mission commander and James Dutton as the pilot. They will be joined by Mission Specialists Rick Mastracchio, Dorothy Metcalf-Lindenburger, Clayton Anderson, Stephanie Wilson and Naoko Yamazaki of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency. Dutton, Metcalf-Lindenburger and Yamazaki will be making their first trips into space. Metcalf-Lindenburger is a member of the cadre of former educators trained as mission specialists and the last of that group scheduled to fly on the shuttle.

The schedule of briefings includes (all times CST):

8:00 a.m. -- Program Overview

9:30 a.m. -- STS-131 Mission Overview

11:30 a.m. -- STS-131 Spacewalk Overview

1:00 p.m. -- STS-131 Crew News Conference

The crew will be available for interviews at Johnson after the briefings. Reporters must contact Gayle Frere at 281-483-8645 by March 5 to reserve an interview opportunity. Reporters planning to attend the briefings in Houston must contact the Johnson newsroom at 281-483-5111 by 5 p.m. CST on March 3 for credentials.

For NASA TV downlink information, schedules and links to streaming video, visit:

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

For the latest information about the STS-131 mission and its crew, visit:

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

For more information about the space station and its crew, visit:

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

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