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NASA Briefing Highlights Education Outreach During Next Shuttle Flight

Next mission includes teacher turned astronaut Dottie Metcalf-Lindenburger

HOUSTON -- NASA will highlight the educational activities planned on the next space shuttle mission during a news briefing at 12 p.m. CDT, Tuesday, March 9. The briefing will originate from NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston and be carried live on NASA Television and the agency's Web site. Reporters will be able to ask questions from participating NASA locations.

Astronaut and former school teacher Ricky Arnold will be joined by Cindy McArthur from the Teaching from Space

Office to discuss educational activities involving astronaut and former teacher Dottie Metcalf-Lindenburger during the STS-131 shuttle flight. Metcalf-Lindenburger will be the last of the three school teachers selected as mission specialists in the 2004 Educator Astronaut Class to fly on the space shuttle. Arnold and Joseph Acaba flew on the STS-119 shuttle mission in March 2009.

The educational activities on the STS-131 shuttle mission to the International Space Station will focus on robotics and careers in science, technology, engineering and math. The briefing also will explain how educators can become involved in learning activities during and after the shuttle mission.

Without robotics, major accomplishments of building the station, repairing satellites in space and exploring other worlds would not be possible. Metcalf-Lindenburger will operate the space shuttle's robotic arm and a 50-foot Orbiter Boom Sensing System to inspect the shuttle for any damage that might have occurred during launch or in space. A digital camera and laser system on the boom's end provide three-dimensional imagery used by analysts to assess the health of the shuttle's heat shield.

For more information about robotics education, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/education/robotics>

The education briefing is part of a series of news conferences to preview the STS-131 mission. Metcalf-Lindenburger and her crewmates will be available at 1 p.m. during a crew news conference from Johnson that will air on NASA TV. For Metcalf-Lindenburger's complete biography, visit:

<http://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/metcalf-lindenburger-dm.html>

Discovery is targeted to launch April 5 from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Following STS-131, only three more shuttle flights are scheduled. For more information on the mission, visit:

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

For NASA TV streaming video, downlink and schedule information, visit:

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

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