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Feb. 23, 2010

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MEDIA ADVISORY : M10-037

NASA's Space Shuttle Discovery Rolls to Launch Pad; Liftoff Practice Set

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. -- Journalists are invited to cover the STS-131 space shuttle crew's practice countdown and related training March 2-5 at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Reporters also may cover space shuttle Discovery's move from the Vehicle Assembly Building to Launch Pad 39A on March 2.

Atop of a giant crawler-transporter, Discovery's first motion on its rollout to the pad is scheduled for Tuesday at 12:01 a.m. EST. The 3.4-mile journey is expected to take approximately six hours. Activities include a 6:30 a.m. photo opportunity, followed by an 8:30 a.m. interview availability with Discovery Flow Director Stephanie Stilson. Reporters must arrive at Kennedy's news center by 6 a.m. for transportation to the viewing area.

Live coverage of the move will be shown on NASA Television beginning at 6:30 a.m. Video highlights will air on the NASA TV Video File.

Beginning March 2, Discovery's astronauts and ground crews will participate in a launch dress rehearsal, known as the Terminal Countdown Demonstration Test, or TCDT. The test provides each shuttle crew with an opportunity to participate in various simulated countdown activities, including equipment familiarization and emergency training.

The following media events are associated with the TCDT. All times are Eastern.

- March 1 -- STS-131 crew arrival: The crew will arrive about 7 p.m. at the Shuttle Landing Facility. The arrival will be carried live on NASA TV. Reporters must be at the Kennedy press site at 5:45 p.m. to attend arrival.
- March 4 -- STS-131 crew media availability: The crew will take questions from journalists at Launch Pad 39A at 8:40 a.m. The event will be carried live on NASA TV. Media representatives must arrive at the press site by 7:15 a.m. to participate.
- March 5 -- STS-131 crew walkout photo opportunity: The astronauts will depart from the Operations and Checkout Building at 7:45 a.m. in their flight suits in preparation for the countdown demonstration test at the launch pad. The walkout will not be broadcast live but will be part of the NASA TV Video File. Reporters must arrive at the press site by 6:15 a.m. to attend walkout.

Foreign journalist media accreditation for these events is closed. U.S. reporters without permanent Kennedy credentials must apply for accreditation by 4 p.m., Friday, Feb. 26. Reporters requesting accreditation must apply online at:

<https://media.ksc.nasa.gov>

Badges for the events must be picked up Monday through Friday between 6 a.m. and 4 p.m. at the Kennedy Space Center Badging Office on State Road 405.

Dates and times of events are subject to change. Schedule updates are available by calling 321-867-2525.

Discovery's STS-131 crew members are Commander Alan Poindexter, Pilot James P. Dutton, Jr., Mission Specialists Rick Mastracchio, Dorothy Metcalf-Lindenburger, Stephanie Wilson, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Naoko Yamazaki and Clayton Anderson. The seven astronauts will deliver science racks to be transferred to laboratories on the International Space Station. Launch is targeted for 6:27 a.m. EDT on April 5.

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

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

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

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

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