



Ares 1-X rocket segment

ATK Preparing to Ship Ares 1-X Motors to Kennedy

Alliant Techsystems (ATK) is preparing to ship the Ares 1-X launch vehicle's four-segment solid-rocket motor to NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida for a planned test flight this summer.

Ares 1-X, a prototype of the Ares 1 rocket planned to boost an Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle into orbit for trips to the international space station beginning in 2015, is scheduled for a July 11 liftoff. The reusable solid-rocket motor will be shipped from ATK's Promontory, Utah, facility in February for integration with a simulated fifth solid-rocket motor segment and Ares 1-X upper stage.

The motor bears a "Z strip" painted across its body to allow the test team to

observe rolling motions during its ascent and tumbling motions during separation and recovery.

In preparation for the test flight, ATK announced Jan. 29 that it had conducted a full-scale test simulating a separation event that precedes the release the three main parachutes that will allow the spent booster to return to Earth for reuse. The test demonstrated a full-scale separation of the forward skirt extension, a 1.8-meter-long by 3.6-meter-diameter aluminum cylinder that separates the rocket's first and upper stages and houses the main parachutes that would be deployed at about 1,213 meters to slow the booster's descent to Earth.