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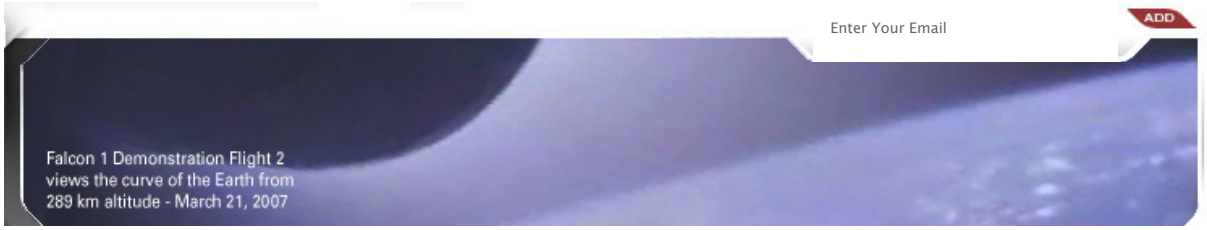

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NASA SELECTS SPACEX TO RETURN AMERICANS TO SPACE

Hawthorne, CA – Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX) today won a $440 million contract with NASA to develop the successor to the Space Shuttle and transport American astronauts into space.

"This is a decisive milestone in human spaceflight and sets an exciting course for the next phase of American space exploration," said SpaceX CEO and Chief Designer Elon Musk. "SpaceX, along with our partners at NASA, will continue to push the boundaries of space technology to develop the safest, most advanced crew vehicle ever flown."

SpaceX expects to undertake its first manned flight by 2015 – a timetable that capitalizes on the proven success of the company's Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon spacecraft combination. While Dragon is initially being used to transport cargo to the International Space Station, both Dragon and Falcon 9 were designed from the beginning to carry crew.

Under the Commercial Crew Integrated Capability (CCiCap) initiative's base period, SpaceX will make the final modifications necessary to prepare Dragon to safely transport astronauts into space. These include:

- Seats for seven astronauts.
- The most technically advanced launch escape system ever developed, with powered abort possibilities from launch pad to orbit. SpaceX will demonstrate that Dragon will be able to escape a launch-pad emergency by firing integrated SuperDraco engines to carry the spacecraft safely to the ocean. SpaceX will also conduct an in-flight abort test that allows Dragon to escape at the moment of maximum aerodynamic drag, again by firing the SuperDraco thrusters to carry the spacecraft a safe distance from the rocket.
- A breakthrough propulsive landing system for gentle ground touchdowns on legs.
- Refinements and rigorous testing of essential aspects of Dragon's design, including life-support systems and an advanced cockpit design complete with modern human interfaces.

SpaceX will perform stringent safety and mission-assurance analyses to demonstrate that all these systems meet NASA requirements.

With a minimal number of stage separations, all-liquid rocket engines that can be throttled and turned off in an emergency, engine-out capability during ascent, and powered abort capability all the way to orbit, the Falcon 9-Dragon combination will be the safest spacecraft ever developed.

About SpaceX

SpaceX designs, manufactures and launches the world's most advanced rockets and spacecraft. With a diverse manifest of more than 40 launches to resupply the space station and deliver commercial and government satellites to orbit, SpaceX is the world's fastest growing launch services provider. In 2012, SpaceX made history when its Dragon spacecraft became the first commercial vehicle to successfully attach to the International Space Station – a feat previously achieved by only four governments. With the retirement of the Space Shuttle, the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon spacecraft are carrying cargo, and one day will carry astronauts, to and from the space station for NASA. Founded in 2002 by Elon Musk, SpaceX is a private company owned by management and employees, with minority investments from Founders Fund, Draper Fisher Jurvetson, and Valor Equity Partners. The company has more than 1,800 employees in California, Texas, Florida and Washington, DC. For more information, visit **SpaceX.com**.

VIDEO: **http://youtu.be/MZJk4CrxctQ**.

PHOTOGRAPHY: **http://spacexlaunch.zenfolio.com/p70000514**.

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