



Special Countdown Issue

2 Days to Launch!

SORCE Mission Activity –

Isn't it nice when a plan comes together! So far, so good -- the SORCE launch remains set for Saturday, January 25 from Kennedy Space Center (KSC). The launch is scheduled for 3:10 p.m. Eastern Time, 1:10 p.m. Mountain Standard Time.

Tuesday's Flight Readiness Review at KSC went smoothly. According to Gary Rottman, there were no action items resulting from the review and things are progressing as expected.



At approximately 3:30 a.m. Wednesday morning the engineering crew began transporting the integrated spacecraft and Pegasus to the launch site. The fairing is on the left side of the photo and has a protective covering that will remain in place until launch day. Photo by David Gathright.

Tentative Dates for Upcoming Events:

- 1/21/03 Flight Readiness Review (KSC)
- 1/22/03 SORCE/Pegasus Transported to Hot Pad
- 1/24/03 Launch Readiness Reviews (GSFC/KSC)
- 1/25/03 SORCE Launch (KSC)

Very early Wednesday morning the integrated spacecraft and Pegasus were transported from the high bay area to the hot pad, which is right next to the final launch site. The launch vehicle and payload were moved over the 6-mile causeway by the same large trailer that transported the Pegasus into the high bay area when it arrived from Vandenberg Air Force Base in mid December for integration.

Following are a sequence of photos showing the process for reuniting the Pegasus with the L-1011 aircraft carrier. Once the two have been joined, payload operations and testing will continue until launch.



The Pegasus (shown on the right) arrived at the hot pad early Wednesday morning before sunrise. The fairing is the gray portion on the left side above the trailer wheels. Photo by David Gathright.



The L-1011 aircraft carrier was lifted off the ground with hydraulic jacks under the wings, and then gently lowered onto the Pegasus and secured. The Pegasus is not shown in this photo.



Once the Pegasus is under the L-1011, the crew makes sure the two are perfectly aligned before securing them with hooks and steel pins. There is a launch-site support trailer behind the L-1011 on the left side of the photo, where final launch preparations and testing will be performed. Photo by David Gathright.

The final Launch Readiness Review is scheduled for the day before launch, Friday. At this review engineers and administrators will for the last time review all aspects of the launch and determine if the mission is ready to proceed. The approach is a much more global picture of the mission, since many of the past reviews have cover the preliminary details to get them to this point. Some of the topics that will be covered include range staffing, safety requirements, communication and radar needs in place, ground operations, weather forecasts, the overall state of the L-1011, the Pegasus, the spacecraft and the payload.

NASA will be hosting a SORCE Press Conference at KSC on Friday, January 24, at 1:00 p.m. EST, 11:00 a.m. MST. Gary Rottman and Tom Sparn, along with NASA officials, will be presenting and fielding questions from the

press. This Press Conference will be televised by NASA and is available for viewing via satellite or the internet. It will last no more than one hour.

For people working at the LASP facility in Boulder, the Press Conference on Friday will be shown in the LASP Auditorium, room 299, beginning at 11:00 a.m. For those interested in viewing the Press Conference via the internet, NASA TV is serviced by several World Wide Web sources. To find out what internet companies are covering NASA TV, go to:

<http://www.nasa.gov/ntv>, where there is a listing of the web sources. Generally, the best web source for viewing NASA TV is NASA Spaceflight Web, since they use Windows Media Player, which is installed on most Windows-based PCs (free of charge). The website is at <http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/realdata/nasatv/index.html>.

The SORCE website is also an excellent source for the information you need – <http://lasp.colorado.edu/sorce>.

