

Boeing To Build Spacecrafts

Brendan Farrington, Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Boeing will announce an agreement with Space Florida on Monday to lease the hangar that housed the space shuttles to build similar craft that will bring people and cargo to space.

The deal with the state's space agency will create 140 jobs in the next 18 months and 550 jobs by 2015 in an area that's lost jobs as the space shuttle program was retired earlier this year, according to Gov. Rick Scott's office and President Barack Obama's administration.

"Florida has five decades of leadership in the space industry, which makes our state the logical place for the next phase of space travel and exploration," Scott said in prepared remarks obtained by The Associated Press. "Boeing's choice of Florida for its Commercial Crew program headquarters is evidence Florida has the world-class facilities and workforce expertise needed for aerospace companies to succeed."

Likewise, the Obama administration praised the agreement between the Chicago-based Boeing and Space Florida.

"The next era of space exploration won't wait, and so we can't wait for Congress to do its job and give our space program the funding it needs. That's why my administration will be pressing forward, in partnership with Space Florida and the private sector, to create jobs and make sure America continues to lead the world in exploration and discovery," Obama said in prepared remarks obtained by The Associated Press.

The reusable space capsules will be able to bring up to seven people into space. Right now, the United States doesn't have a way to transport people or cargo to the International Space Station.

Since phasing out the space shuttle program earlier this year, NASA is relying entirely on Russia to get American and other astronauts to the space station.

Obama's administration is criticizing Congress for not approving his request for \$40 million in economic assistance for the region and \$850 million for the Commercial Crew project.

"Neither NASA nor the Space Coast can afford to stand still. We must be aggressive in pursuing this next generation of space exploration — and the jobs and innovation that will accompany it," NASA Administrator Charles Bolden said in prepared remarks.

Scott, however, is criticizing the Obama administration for letting NASA's manned space program lapse.

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Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

"Our country is now completely dependent on Russia for travel to and from space. A private business would never let any part of its operations be dependent on someone else. Fortunately, the space transportation systems being developed by private companies like Boeing will rocket the United States back to forefront of the space industry and help reignite job growth," Scott said in his remarks.

Source URL (retrieved on 12/20/2014 - 3:03am):

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