United Launch Alliance

Date: June 20, 2008
To: All ULA Teammates

Photo by Carleton Bailie.

Congratulations on another successful launch!

Congratulations to the ULA team on the successful launch of the Ocean Surface Topography Mission aboard the Jason-2 satellite (OSTM/Jason-2).

A Delta II 73 20 lifted off today from VAFB carrying OSTM/Jason-2 which will extend the continuous climate record of sea surface height measurements begun in 1992. This joint effort of NASA and Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES) began with Topex/Poseidon (T/P) and continued with the Jason-1 mission launched on a Delta II in December 2001.

Sea level rise is one of the most important consequences and indicators of global climate change. The Earth's oceans are a thermostat for the planet: 50 percent of the Earth's warming over the past 50 years has been absorbed by the oceans. Only from space can we observe our vast oceans on a global scale and monitor critical changes in ocean currents and heat storage. Continuous data from satellites like TOPEX/Poseidon and Jason help us understand and foresee the effects of the changing oceans on our climate and on catastrophic climate events such as El Niño and La Niña. Jason-2, which will provide a minimum of three years of measurements, extends the time series of ocean surface topography measurements beyond TOPEX/Poseidon (T/P) and Jason to accomplish two decades of observations.

OSTM/Jason-2 was launched for NASA as part of the NASA Launch Services (NLS) contract. NASA's collaborative partners include CNES, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT).

We congratulate the whole team for the great accomplishment of two successful Delta II missions from two coasts in just nine days. Thank you for demonstrating again that the ULA team is the best in the business!

Michael Gass
President & CEO

Dan Collins
COO