



News release

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BAHEP communicators given experience of a lifetime

BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS – By anyone’s standards, the 1,620-acre campus that is home to NASA-Johnson Space Center is impressive. Building after building contains some of the greatest minds in the world today who devote themselves to the future of space exploration. As one drives through NASA-JSC’s main entrance off Saturn Lane, one of the first things that attracts attention is Rocket Park, home of the Saturn V rocket that was used to transport the Apollo astronauts to the moon, and, of course, the herd of Texas Longhorn that lives just west of the park also draws its own share of attention.

The Longhorns were quite a surprise for a few members of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership’s Communications Committee who were touring the facility recently in order to better understand the mission of NASA and the numerous ways in which it is supported locally at the Johnson Space Center. The committee learned that the Longhorn Project was developed as a joint project of JSC, the Clear Creek Independent School District, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America. It provides area high school students a unique learning environment unmatched anywhere else in the world.

In addition to information on the Longhorns and other wildlife that call JSC home, the tour provided the committee with amazing facts about the nation’s space program – past, present and future. NASA’s Sonny Carter Training Facility, located not far off-campus at 13,000 Space Center Blvd., was the group’s first stop. It houses the Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory, where astronauts train for space missions that involve space walks, also referred to as extravehicular activities – EVAs. The tank at the NBL is 202 ft. long, 102 ft. wide and 40 ft. deep. It’s the world’s largest indoor pool, and full-sized replicas of space station modules are located deep within it.

Next on the tour was the Space Vehicle Mockup Facility, commonly known as Building 9 to NASA-JSC employees. In it are International Space Station trainers, Space Shuttle trainers, and a Russian Soyuz trainer as well. There is information on NASA’s Constellation Program that will launch in 2015 taking humans to the moon, Mars and beyond in the Orion crew exploration vehicle. For nearly an hour the tour group walked through and climbed around many of the life-sized mockups. It gave everyone a truer appreciation of the austere lifestyle that America’s astronauts live while working in low Earth orbit either aboard a Space Shuttle or as part of the ISS crew.

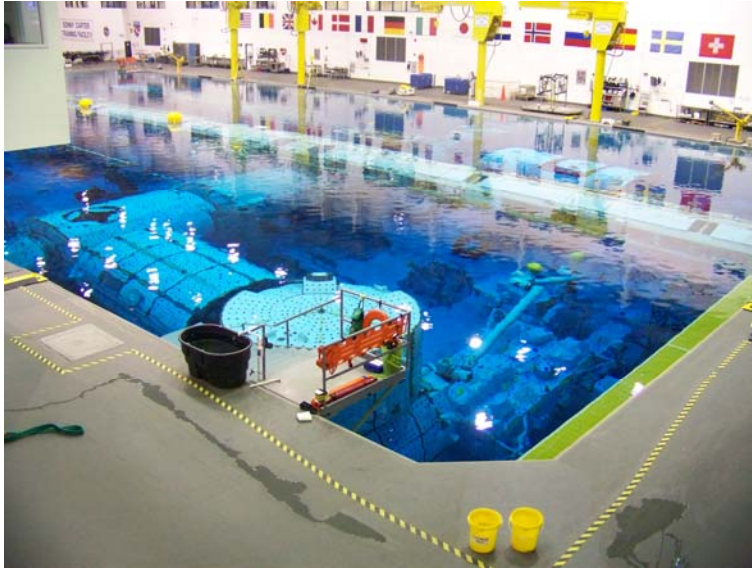
JSC's three mission control centers are located in Building 30. The International Space Station Flight Control Room and Space Shuttle Flight Control Room are actively in use, while the Apollo Era Mission Operations Control Room, once the hub of human space flight, now serves as an historical reminder of the infancy of this nation's space program. When the crew of Apollo 13 found themselves in mortal danger, the words "failure is not an option" were spoken within that room.

The Communications Committee rounded out the tour at Rocket Park, learning more about the evolution of space flight. The Saturn V rocket is 30 stories tall and one of only three in existence. It is one of the largest and most significant artifacts in the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum collection and has been on loan to Johnson since 1977. The rocket is made up of parts from launch vehicles originally designated for Apollo 18 and 20. The Saturn V remains the most powerful rocket ever built.

At the end of the afternoon, the group of BAHEP communicators unanimously felt a more complete understanding of and a renewed appreciation for America's space program thanks to the efforts of Steve Nunez, NASA Executive on Loan to the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, who arranged the tour, as well as Brian Freedman and Kacy Kossum of NASA's Community and Government Relations Office who expertly guided the group through the experience of a lifetime.



Members of the Communications Committee of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership recently took a NASA tour to better understand the mission of NASA and the numerous ways in which it is supported locally at the Johnson Space Center. Pictured left to right are Donna Anderson, Rebecca Thompson, Jaime Napoli, Melissa Hodges, Kathryn Cooper, Pat Patton, Cathy Turner, Pamela Archer, Simon Urbanic and Marcy Fryday.



The Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory houses the world's largest indoor pool, and full-sized replicas of space station modules are located deep within it.



The Space Vehicle Mockup Facility, commonly known as Building 9 to NASA-JSC employees, contains a full-sized Space Shuttle trainer, without its wings which would occupy too much room.