



PRESS RELEASE

ASNA AND ROCKETPLANE KISTLER SIGN LETTER OF INTENT

Alenia Spazio North America (ASNA) & Rocketplane Kistler announce intent to collaborate on multiple projects

Oklahoma City, OK, May 18, 2006 – ASNA, a subsidiary of Alcatel Alenia Space, and Rocketplane Kistler (RpK) have announced the signing of a strategic Letter of Intent (LOI) for multi-faceted areas of cooperation. Although the strategic scope of the LOI is proprietary, it does include ASNA's participation as a major member of the RpK contractor team with responsibility for the development of both the pressurized and unpressurized cargo modules required for International Space Station (ISS) re-supply. The Statement of Work for this major development effort has been agreed to, and work has already commenced by ASNA and AAS (Alcatel Alenia Space).

George French, Chairman of the Board and CEO of RpK, provided his enthusiastic endorsement of the LOI: "Alcatel Alenia Space's abilities and experience in space are most impressive and their detailed knowledge of ISS and ISS re-supply make them uniquely qualified to lead the development effort of the K-1 Cargo Modules. These modules will enable the RpK K-1 to deliver the requested 8400 kgs of upmass to the ISS annually. Also critically important is the capability of the K-1 Cargo Modules to deliver the requested 3000 kgs of downmass annually. The K-1 Cargo Modules are designed to enable space research on ISS through optimized configuration of multiple ISS science payload racks."

Randy Brinkley, President of RpK, made the following comments: "ASNA and Alcatel Alenia Space are clearly a world leader in the development of pressurized space structures. Their efforts on developing Node 2, Node 3, the three MPLMs, and the participation to ESA's Columbus Orbital Research Module are impressive examples of their capabilities and knowledge of the ISS and requirements for ISS re-supply."

Luciano Sacconi, CEO of ASNA, added the following comments: "We are very excited by the opportunities provided by this LOI, as it will further strengthen our partnership with Rocketplane Kistler in particular with regards to the development of the Cargo Modules for the resupply of the ISS."

Luigi Maria Quaglino, Senior Vice President & General Manager of Space Infrastructure and Transportation activities for Alcatel Alenia Space, pointed out "the outstanding market opportunities currently emerging in commercial space transportation."

About Alcatel Alenia Space

Alcatel Alenia Space is the European leader in satellite systems, at the forefront of orbit infrastructures. Created in July 2005, the company brings together the vast experience and know-how of Alcatel Space and Alenia Spazio to form a new leading force in European space technology. Alcatel Alenia Space represents a worldwide standard for space development that impacts everybody's future: from navigation to telecommunications, from meteorology to environmental monitoring, from defense to science and observation. Alcatel Alenia Space is an affiliate of Alcatel (Paris: CGEP.PA and NYSE: ALA) (67%) and Finmeccanica (Milan:SIFI.MI, FNC.IM) (33%).

About Alenia Spazio North America (ASNA)

ASNA, headquartered in Cupertino, California, is a fully-owned subsidiary of Alcatel Alenia Space. AAS developed and manufactured most of the pressurized modules of the ISS (Node 2, Node 3, three MPLMs logistic modules, Cupola, major elements of Columbus European Orbital facility). ASNA is also involved, at the KSC, in the ground operations of the ISS; specifically, the company participates in the CAPPS - Checkout Assembly Payloads Preparations System.

About Rocketplane Kistler

Rocketplane Kistler (RpK) brings together two industry-leading makers and future operators of the next-generation orbital and suborbital space transportation vehicles. RpK was formed when Kistler Aerospace Corporation and Rocketplane Limited, Inc. were brought under common ownership. RpK markets the services of the fully reusable, two stage Kistler K-1 orbital launch vehicle and the fully reusable, suborbital Rocketplane XP Spaceplane, both of which will be first to fly in their respective markets.

Rocketplane Limited, Inc.

Rocketplane was formed in 2001 to develop and produce vehicles for the suborbital space tourism market. Over the last 5 years, Rocketplane developed and is currently building the first XP Spaceplane, a four-seat, fighter sized vehicle powered by two jet engines and a rocket engine. It will fly in late 2007.

Kistler Aerospace Corporation.

Kistler was formed in 1993 to design, develop and operate the first fully reusable orbital space transportation vehicles. Kistler has completed significant K-1 production milestones, including production of primary structure and engine testing. The K-1's design enables it to provide a variety of space transportation services, not only to LEO, but also to Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) and Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).

All told, RpK leverages \$624 million of prior investment, two highly skilled technical and marketing teams, and common proven technologies to enable the company to complete development and manufacturing of two highly reliable space transportation vehicles.

RpK is positioned to competitively address critical NASA/DOD requirements in the near term and to capture emerging opportunities in space transportation.

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