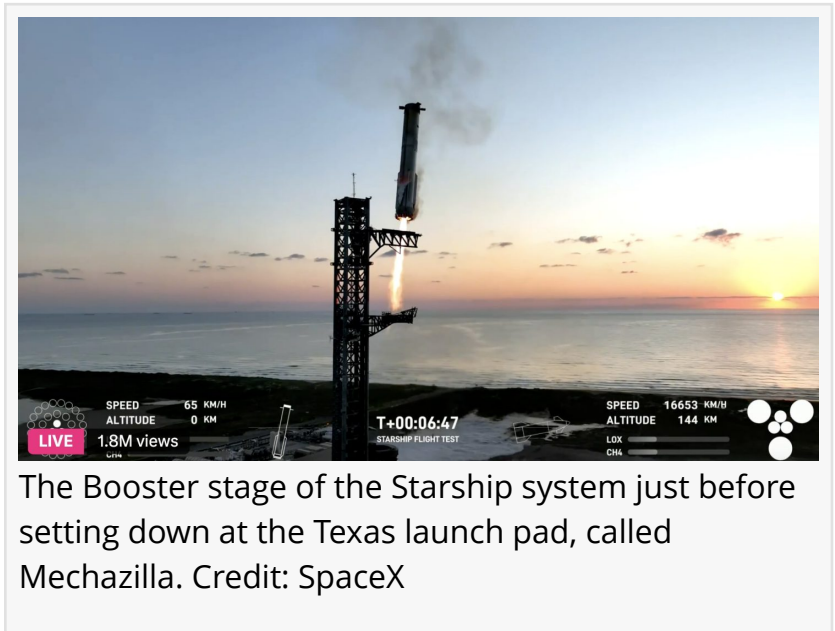


NATIONAL SPACE SOCIETY PRAISES FIFTH TEST FLIGHT OF SPACEX'S STARSHIP

Orbital Refueling, the Artemis Program's Lunar Landing, and Voyages to Mars Now Closer to Reality

KENNDY SPACE CENTER, FL, UNITED STATES, October 14, 2024

/EINPresswire.com/ -- In the early hours of October 13, SpaceX launched its fifth flight test of the gargantuan Starship system from Boca Chica, Texas. The test appears to have met its major objectives, with the first stage, called Booster, returning to the Starbase launch site, and the upper stage, called Ship, splashing down in the Indian Ocean, as planned, just over an hour later.



The Booster stage of the Starship system just before setting down at the Texas launch pad, called Mechazilla. Credit: SpaceX

While the entire flight was impressive to observers, perhaps the most remarkable aspect was the daring test of the booster return system. While in planning for a few years, this was the first in-

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Karlton Johnson, NSS CEO and Chairman of the Board of Governors

flight test, and it was successful. The first stage returned from its highest point in flight, firing its braking rockets, then plunged toward the Starbase launch tower at an almost alarming speed. Finally, Booster throttled up to nearly a hover as it righted itself and slowly settled into the landing catch arms, which SpaceX calls “chopsticks,” on the launch tower, dubbed “Mechazilla.”

“This was an astonishing display of both audacity and technical prowess,” said Dale Skran, COO and Senior Vice President of the [National Space Society](#). “Getting this catch maneuver right on the first try is well beyond what we’re

used to seeing from SpaceX, which often involves iterative test failures, and this suggests a maturity in the team and the technology beyond what may be obvious.”

Karlton Johnson, CEO of the NSS, said, "I'd like to congratulate the entire SpaceX team for this outstanding achievement today. They are continuing to open the space frontier at a pace beyond expectation. Special acknowledgement goes to Elon, Gwynne Shotwell, SpaceX's President; Bill Gerstenmaier, Vice President of Build and Flight Reliability and former NASA senior executive; and Kathy Lueders, former manager of NASA's Commercial Crew Program and now General Manager of Starbase. They should all be quite proud of this signal achievement. Also, a tip of the hat to the Federal Aviation Administration, who has the often-challenging job of green-lighting these test flights." The NSS has had the privilege of hosting these leaders at its [International Space Development Conference®](#) (ISDC®) in the past.

The NSS is thrilled with this progress and extends its support to SpaceX's ongoing development of the Starship system and its derivatives, including NASA's Human Landing System, for which a special Starship is being designed. "This is an example of what can happen when engineers and scientists are empowered to dare mighty things. We need more of this, not less," Skran said. "There are many steps to go before Starship lands astronauts on the Moon, but this was a big one. We look forward to continued rapid progress, including validation of orbital refueling of the upper stage and an uncrewed lunar landing test."

SpaceX's Starship represents a potential revolution in affordable and rapidly reusable launch capability. "Other companies, including Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin, United Launch Alliance, and Sierra Space are also in the running," noted Skran. "Ultimately, the NSS looks forward to multiple competitors in low-cost, reusable launch."

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SPACE SOCIETY

The National Space Society was founded in 1987 via a merger of the National Space Institute and the L5 Society. The NSS is the preeminent citizen's voice on space exploration, development, and settlement. To learn more about the NSS and its mission to establish humanity as a spacefaring species, visit us on the web at nss.org.

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