WORLD'S BIGGEST SPACE PARTY COMES TO HAMPTON ROADS
The world's biggest space party is coming to Hampton Roads. Partygoers will join space enthusiasts in 198 cities and 51 countries for Yuri's Night, a celebration of space exploration, April 4, from 7 p.m. to midnight at the Virginia Air & Space Center (VASC) in downtown Hampton. Yuri's Night Hampton Roads' high-tech theme will focus on space exploration and what is new and exciting at NASA. The event will feature a fusion of entertainment including a laser light show, Hampton Roads' favorite DJ Jey One, a "Mars"tini lounge, star gazing, dance demonstrations, high-tech NASA exhibits, live art displays, robots and more. Yuri's Night Hampton Roads is presented by NASA Langley and the VASC, with additional support from businesses in the Hampton Roads area. For information, contact Emily Outen at 864-7022 or emily.s.outen@nasa.gov.

BE A FRIEND OF APOLLO AND HELP CELEBRATE ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY
NASA Langley is planning a number of activities as America nears the 40th anniversary of the first moon landing on July 20. Join the fun by becoming an “Apollo Fourtieth” Facebook friend at http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1324387701. Local Apollo anniversary events include a prescreening of “The Wonder of it All,” the award-winning feature-length film that chronicles the personal story of seven Apollo astronauts, at the Virginia Air & Space Center, July 20, with introduction by the film’s producer. Other events include a NASA Langley Astronomy Club “Moon Viewing” at Newport News’ New Quarter Park the evening of Aug. 1. For weekly features on Langley’s contribution to Apollo see http://www.nasa.gov/centers/langley/home/. NASA's Apollo 40th Web site with downloadable videos and images is at http://www.nasa.gov/apollo40th. Contact Keith Henry at 757-864-6120 or h.k.henry@nasa.gov.

LOCAL ROBOT TEAMS MAKE IT TO THE "BIG DANCE"
Two Hampton Roads student teams have qualified for the FIRST Robotics National Championship April 16-18 at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta. One of them is a team sponsored by NASA Langley from the Peninsula's New Horizons Regional Education Center. The other is from Hickory High in Chesapeake, Va. FIRST Robotics was established to inspire youngsters to participate in science and technology. It encourages high school students to use their engineering and psychological skills to tackle a robotic challenge presented in the form of a game. For more information, contact Kathy Barnstorff at 757/864-9886 or by e-mail at Kathy.Barnstorff@nasa.gov.

NASA TO BEGIN NEW PHASE OF ORION LANDING SYSTEMS TESTING
NASA Langley will begin a new phase of testing in April for the Orion crew module, NASA's next generation spacecraft. The series of tests will evaluate the crew module energy absorbing seat system to provide the lowest risk of injury to the crew under a range of landing conditions Orion could face after returning from a mission to the space station or the moon. Engineers will drop a 20,000-pound test article at the Landing and Impact Research Facility, a 240-foot-tall steel structure also known as the gantry. Designed and fabricated at Langley, the test article represents the Orion crew module seat pallet that will accommodate between four and six astronauts. For more information, contact Emily Outen at 864-7022 or emily.s.outen@nasa.gov.
ASTRONAUT SAFETY GETS MAX ATTENTION

NASA’s next generation of spacecraft will have the safest-ever astronaut escape system, a modern-day version of the reliable Apollo system. Like Apollo, the Orion launch abort system will swiftly propel the crew capsule away from the nose of the Ares I rocket and out of harm’s way in case of an emergency on the launch pad or during ascent to orbit. In a parallel effort, an alternate approach called the Max Launch Abort System will be tested in a simulated pad abort test at NASA’s Wallops Flight Facility, Wallops Island, Va., in late April or early May. The un试点ed test is part of an assessment by the NASA Engineering and Safety Center of a potential alternate launch abort system which could be used for future piloted spacecraft. For information or for test coverage details, contact Keith Henry at 757-864-6120 or h.k.henry@nasa.gov.

CLIMATE INSTRUMENT STUDIES UNEXPLORED REGION OF ATMOSPHERE

FIRST, an atmosphere-observing instrument from NASA Langley will be in Colorado for testing before its official mission takes place this summer in high-altitude mountains of Chile. The Far-Infrared Spectroscopy of the Troposphere (FIRST) instrument will study a range of infrared radiation that could be playing a key role in the earth’s climate but has not been closely studied. FIRST is a candidate instrument for the Climate Absolute Radiance & Refractivity Observatory (CLARREO) mission that will be managed by Langley and has been labeled one of the highest priority climate science missions by the National Research Council. For more information, contact Chris Rink at 757-864-6786 or christopher.p.rink@nasa.gov.

NASA SCIENTISTS CELEBRATE EARTH DAY IN THE COMMUNITY

Two researchers from NASA Langley will give free lectures in celebration of Earth Day. On April 18 at 1 p.m., Dave Young will discuss “Looking at Earth from Space” at the Virginia Zoo’s “Party for the Planet: Earth Day at the Zoo.” His talk will range from early observations of our home planet by Apollo missions to current sensors that study Earth’s changing climate. On April 21 at 7 p.m., Dr. Jack Fishman will present “Satellite Observations of Air Pollution: Local Impacts Seen from a Global Perspective.” His talk is at Thomas Nelson Community College in the Espada Conference Center, Hampton. Contact Chris Rink at 757-864-6786 or christopher.p.rink@nasa.gov.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF U.S. SPACEFLIGHT

In the next episode of NASA 360, online April 20, viewers will take a trip to Kennedy Space Center to see how technologies are used to make space travel possible. The award-winning series is produced in a partnership between NASA Langley and the National Institute of Aerospace. The series appears on TV outlets around the world and is vodcast at http://www.nasa.gov/nasa360. For more information, contact Kathy Barnstorff at 757-864-9886 or Kathy.barnstorff@nasa.gov.

SPEAKER SERIES

Media are invited to attend talks at daytime presentations to employees at NASA Langley. Speakers are available for interviews before each talk. The public is invited to similar evening presentations at 7:30 at Virginia Air and Space Center, Hampton. Contact Emily Outen at 864-7022 or emily.s.outen@nasa.gov

April 7 – 2 and 7:30 p.m. – “Methane on Mars - Geology, Biology, Neither, or Both?” by Dr. Michael J. Mumma, Goddard Center for Astrobiology

END

NASA Langley news releases are available automatically by sending an e-mail message to langley-news-request@lists.nasa.gov with the word Subscribe in the subject line. You will receive an e-mail instructing you to reply to confirm the action. To unsubscribe, send an e-mail message to langley-news-request@lists.nasa.gov with the word Unsubscribe in the subject line.