

NASA privatizes shuttle operations

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — In the biggest change in the history of the space shuttle program, NASA is turning over day-to-day operations to private industry beginning Tuesday to save money.

"Today is the first day of a new space program in America," NASA Administrator Daniel Goldin said Monday in announcing the \$7 billion, six-year contract with United Space Alliance, a joint venture of Rockwell International Corp. and Lockheed Martin Corp.

Officials promise the shift will be gradual, with shuttle flight safety the No. 1 priority.

In the short term, not even NASA and its contract employees will see much difference.

NASA still will give the final "go"

for launch and make the important decisions during a shuttle flight, as it has for the past 15 years. It will retain ultimate responsibility for shuttle safety and hire the astronauts. And it will still own the four space shuttles.

But it will ease itself out of the routine, day-to-day work, such as preparing the shuttles for flight, training the astronauts and operating Mission Control. Those duties will belong to United Space Alliance.

Don't expect shuttle ads anytime

soon, though, or shuttle seats sold to the highest bidder. Maybe that will come later, said Kent Black, USA's chief executive. Much, much later.

The contract, which was announced Monday but was actually signed late last week, designates United Space Alliance as the single prime contractor for shuttle operations. It includes two two-year extension options that could bring the contract's total value to \$12 billion over 10 years.

USA was formed in August 1995 and chosen by NASA as the single prime contractor three months later.

By compressing many contracts into one — this first phase consolidates 12 previous contracts — NASA hopes to improve shuttle safety, continue to fly shuttles seven or eight times a year, and reduce costs in the \$3 billion-a-year shuttle program.

Because Rockwell and Lockheed Martin already handled most of the shuttle work, the transition, while historic, won't make much immediate difference.

NASA and USA officials said they could not specify how much money would be saved.

However, some NASA employees say they question whether USA can do the job as promised.

Privatization

- Day-to-day shuttle operations turned over to the United Space Alliance
- \$7 billion, six-year contract
- Some jobs will be cut, others created

State briefly

Gov. Bush assigned to county jury pool

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. George W. Bush is on his way to court, but not as a defendant or even a plaintiff.

The Republican governor, and son of former President Bush, claimed to be just an ordinary citizen Monday as he reported for jury duty.

He was assigned to report on Oct. 8 to a Travis County criminal court, where he could be selected from a pool of potential jurors for a case.

"I'm glad to serve," Bush said. "We'll see what the process yields."

Travis County calls a mass pool of potential jurors and divides the pool into smaller groups assigned to courts that handle municipal, county and probate matters.

Bush will go through jury selection before Judge David Cain. But he said he would likely be dismissed because of his job as governor, which includes the power to pardon criminals.

Encephalitis cases reported in Houston

HOUSTON (AP) — Two cases of the potentially fatal St. Louis encephalitis virus have been reported in Houston, city health officials said Monday.

The latest case is a 7-month-old girl who lives in northwest Houston. Friday, blood tests confirmed that a 44-year-old woman had the virus.

Both remain hospitalized, said Kathy Barton, spokeswoman for the Houston Department of Health and Human Services.

The virus is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Symptoms include fever, headache, nausea and disorientation.

Children and the elderly are more at risk. The illness can lead to a coma or even death.

Minimum wage

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ary," Hill said.

Carl Felicio, an official with the United States Department of Labor, said the increase is a positive change all the way around.

"We are big advocates of the minimum wage increase," Felicio said. "It will raise the wages of millions of workers around the country who desperately need it."

The federal act creates a subminimum wage, \$4.25 per hour, for employees under 20 years of age during their first 90 consecutive calendar days of employment. Employers are prohibited from displacing employees in order to hire youth at the subminimum wage.

Working students say the increase is definitely a benefit.

"I'm very glad, it will help a lot," said Sherry Schmidt, junior biology and pre-med major from Austin.

'96 Homecoming queen elections today

Students can vote today for the 1996 Homecoming queen.

Voting tables will be in the business administration rotunda, Holden Hall, the Student Recreation Center, the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and in the north side of the University Center all day.

Vote

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who are opposed to using the fee.

"I don't think it's right for them to use our student fees for something like that," said Justin Herzog, a junior electrical engineering technology major from Lubbock.

More information sometimes leads to a change in position.

Toussaint Martin, a senior pre-med major from Washington D.C., was originally in favor of the arena, but said he changed his position after hearing both sides of the issue.

"It looks good and sounds good, but it is really just a mirage," Martin said. "We need to look behind it and see what is really going on. When was the last time they asked us how to use that money. Before the arena they never asked us; what has it been used for in the past?"

Another problem Martin mentioned about the arena is the fact Tech is footing the bill while the city also will benefit from it.

"The city said no, so now they are taking the money from us," he said. "We should be asking the city

for the money because it will bring the city business, and the city will use it for concerts and special events and make money from it."

Lubbock citizens voted against a half-cent sales tax hike to fund a new arena Jan. 21, 1995 by a margin of 51 to 49 percent.

Daleth Johnson, a junior architecture major from Fort Worth, said although he is in favor of a new arena and does not doubt Tech needs one, it should not be funded with students' money.

"It's a luxury, but the luxury is coming out of our pockets," Johnson said. "That is our money and I think there are a lot of other things it needs to be used for, like better parking."

Students should look to the future and not simply think in terms of this year when voting today, said Joe Hornaday, assistant athletic director for public relations.

"It is about growth and looking ahead and serving the students 30 and 40 years from now," he said.

"Students who say we have adequate meeting space should think about the future."

Simpson trial begins, 'perfect' juror found

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP) — They said it couldn't be done: Attorneys in the O.J. Simpson civil case found a prospective juror Monday who claims to know nothing about the criminal trial and couldn't care less.

"Do you have any strong feelings at all about this case?" asked plaintiff attorney Daniel Petrocelli.

"No I don't," said the woman, who is in her 20s. "I don't even know when it started or ended. I don't have any opinion of anything."

She said she was busy going to school and working and didn't read newspapers or watch TV. The last thing she remembered about the case was Simpson in a Bronco on the freeway — the chase before his arrest in June 1994.

"Are you aware of Shannon Lucid, the woman who orbited the earth over 300 times?" Simpson attorney Robert Baker asked.

"No," the woman said.

"Well, she knows more than you

know about this case," he said, drawing laughter in the courtroom.

The woman was not challenged by either side and was allowed to remain on the prospective jury panel.

Superior Court Judge Hiroshi Fujisaki, who normally admonishes prospects to avoid news coverage, told her: "I guess I don't have to worry about your watching anything."

Simpson was acquitted a year ago this week of murdering his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman. Nevertheless, the Goldman and Brown families filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Simpson.

Most prospects exhibited detailed knowledge of the case and most had feelings about the verdict, but said they could put them aside.

One potential juror said he had been "relieved" when Simpson was acquitted last year because "with all the hype the media had, I was afraid there was going to be a riot."

VOTE YES FOR THE ARENA

NO FEE INCREASE- We are already paying this money and now we have the first time to say where it will go.

PARKING- All displaced spaces will be replaced before construction begins. We will never experience a loss of spaces. The parking lot north of the arena will be double-decked to provide an even better parking situation than we currently have.

STUDENT SEATING- 3,600 prime seats, nearly half of which will be courtside.

VOTE YES FOR THE ARENA TODAY

in the University Center, Business Administration, Holden Hall, and the Student Recreation Center
