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Aurora performed a limit load test of the Orion wing at its Columbus, Mississippi location.

Aurora Flight Sciences Completes Limit Load Test on Orion Wing

Manassas, VA, March 30, 2009 – Aurora Flight Sciences recently completed a limit load test on the wing of the Orion UAS, the largest single piece wing built by Aurora. This test is part of the design and certification process for the long endurance unmanned aerial vehicle.

"Successful completion of the load test marks a major step forward for the Orion technology demonstrator," said John Langford, CEO of Aurora Flight Sciences. "In addition to proving the strength of the wing, the test helps us verify the analytical methods we have used to design the structure."

The 132 foot long, single piece wing is a cantilevered beam design. The wing spars and skins are made entirely of composite material. The wing ribs are a mix of aluminum and composite materials. The wing was fabricated and the test was conducted at Aurora's Columbus, Mississippi plant, a 82,000 square foot purpose built advanced composite manufacturing facility.

To meet certification requirements, the wing must withstand loads up to 1.5 times, or 150 percent, of the highest aerodynamic load or most extreme condition that the aircraft's wing is expected to see in the lifetime of the airplane. Aurora engineers now are performing an extensive analysis of test results.

Aurora was contracted by the Army's Space and Missile Defense Command to design and manufacture a technology demonstrator, the Orion UAS, a long loiter Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) that represents a tremendous leap in capabilities. Aurora has combined its unmatched high altitude experience with commercially proven technologies to create the Orion UAS platform to provide extreme persistence (>100 hours) for military and civilian applications.

Orion solves a critical joint warfighting problem: The need for extreme persistence. Enabling surveillance, reconnaissance, signal intelligence, communications relay, telecommunications infrastructure, and mapping combined with significant operational efficiency gains. Orion's affordability and capabilities also make it an ideal platform for long-dwell, high utility scientific and military observations. The first flight of the Orion UAS is due in 2010.

About Aurora Flight Sciences

Aurora Flight Sciences designs and builds robotic aircraft and other advanced aerospace vehicles for scientific and military applications. Aurora is headquartered in [Manassas, VA](#) and operates production plants in [Bridgeport, WV](#) and [Columbus, MS](#) and a Research and Development Center in [Cambridge, MA](#). To view recent press releases and more about Aurora please visit our web site at www.aurora.aero.

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