SpaceX makes history with a NASA crew on a Commercial Spaceflight

SpaceX adds “wrapper” to NASA’s code: Software, Autonomous Spacecraft, and new Automated Flight Safety Systems

June 2020
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For 40 years, BDPA has enabled the upward mobility of African Americans and other minorities in the Information Technology (IT) and STEM fields. Through its 40+ local community chapters in major cities across the United States, BDPA has been at the forefront of promoting the minority agenda within the IT profession since 1975. BDPA has been a leader and pioneer in technology and STEM training for IT professionals and High School students since 1986.

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BDPA, formerly known as **Black Data Processing Associates**, was established in 1975 and founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to promote professional growth and technical development to those in or entering information and communications technology (ICT) career fields and related industries.

Now in its 45th year (*Volume XLV*) National BDPA (NBDPA) and participating local BDPA Chapters publish daily and weekly blogs with quarterly or monthly newsletters.

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AFRL: Small Business Technology Transfer

DAYTON, OH — The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program was established by Congress in 1982 to fund research and development (R&D) by small businesses of 500 or fewer employees. Eleven federal agencies participate in this program, including the Department of Defense (DoD).

The Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program was established in 1992 to fund cooperative R&D projects with small businesses and non-profit U.S. research institutions, such as colleges or universities. Five federal agencies participate, including DoD. Both programs focus on projects and services with the potential to develop into products, solutions, or services for both military and commercial sectors.

Small businesses and new startups can respond to Air Force Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs), three times a year. These topics address critical needs identified by U.S. warfighters. Small business proposals are reviewed and awarded SBIR/STTR contracts based on their likelihood to fulfill the identified need.

With the initiation of open innovation topics, through work with AFWERX, Air Force SBIR contracts are being issued with unprecedented expediency. Small businesses that have been awarded a Phase I open innovation topic contract also are being invited to present their solutions for a Phase II contract at Air Force Pitch Day events, where contracts are awarded on the spot. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are highly encouraged to partner with start-ups and small businesses when pivoting from “Grants-To-Contracts.” Learn and earn more by visiting: https://www.afsbirsttr.af.mil/.

National BDPA is co-hosting an Air Force STTR HBCU Collider with Small Businesses, Start-Ups, and HBCUs during this year’s annual technology conference, BDPA2020.com.

— Source and photo: U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL)
06.02.20—President Trump issued an emergency executive order directing federal agencies, including the Department of Transportation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to expedite federal infrastructure projects by waiving environmental regulations in view of the emergency caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Federal agencies must report within 30 days with a list of projects they have expedited under this order.

06.08.20—The Senate is in session this week. The Senate will take up an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reform bill and legislation to permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at $900 million per annum, which uses oil and gas revenue to fund conservation programs such as securing land for national parks. The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) will begin a series of markups of the FY2021 defense authorization bill (NDAA 2021).

As the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2019-2020 term comes to an end this month, the court over the next 2 weeks will be issuing decisions on abortion, Electoral College procedures, LGBT rights in the workplace, the deportation status of nearly 700,000 young undocumented immigrants and the fate of President Trump’s tax returns.

WASHINGTON — In May 2015, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) launched CBC TECH 2020 to bring together the best minds in the tech, non-profit, education and public sectors to chart a path forward to increase African American inclusion at all levels of the technology industry. The lack of African American representation in tech means that many of our best and brightest – the problem solvers, critical thinkers, and those that challenge conventional thinking – are not included, and America’s global competitiveness suffers as a result.

As a part of the CBC TECH 2020 five-year plan, members of the CBC Diversity Task force held several meetings with Industry’s most influential tech executives in an effort to encourage them to implement diversity plans that place more African Americans directly into their tech pipelines.

The CBC understands that each company or organization requires a unique approach to diversity and inclusion. Toward this end, CBC continued working with companies and organizations to adopt diversity inclusion plans or African American inclusion plans that would outline specific, measurable steps the company would take to increase recruitment and retention of African Americans within their respective industry verticals.

CBC TECH 2020 reports from participating mission partners are expected shortly after year’s end. National BDPA and local BDPA Chapters have supported CBC’s inclusion plan by accomplishing the following since fiscal year 2015 (FY15).

Prior to the conclusion of this plan, National BDPA continues to work with Industry to establish and formalize partnerships with Silicon Valley technology firms to facilitate a pipeline of internships, as well as entry-level and experienced-hire talent. These partnerships may include any or all of the following: financial commitment, in-kind donations, recruitment opportunities, scholarships, internships, strategic and executive support National BDPA’s plan with CBC is available on the association’s CBC TECH 2020 landing page: https://www.bdpa.org/page/CBCTech2020.

During our next decade, trade associations and community tech organizations such as BDPA will continue their work with Industry, Academia, Congress, General Assembly, and City Councils to address and properly fund technical workforce development, cybersecurity, anti-trust, ethics, intellectual property, and data privacy initiatives.
CBC Commends Texas District for Naming Elementary School After Long Serving Member, Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson

DALLAS, TX (BDPA Dallas) — The Texas District Board of Trustees has announced that one of two new schools in their district will be named after long serving Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson. Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, fondly known as EBJ, is currently serving her 14th term in Congress. She is the first African American and female to Chair the **House Science, Space & Technology Committee**. She is also a Senior Member of the **Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure**, Dean of the Texas Congressional delegation in addition to serving as Dean of the Texas, New Mexico and Arizona Democratic Congressional Delegation.

According to the Dallas Independent School District and Wilmer City officials the Eddie Bernice Johnson Elementary School will consist of 84,000 square feet of classrooms and other learning spaces designed to serve 600 students in grades pre-K through five. The school will include a soccer field, basketball court and playground.

The Congressional Black Caucus has benefited from the leadership of Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson not only as a Member, but Chair of the Caucus from 2001 to 2003, steering the advocacy and legislative priorities for Black America through the Caucus. She is also the founder of the Congressional Tri-Caucus (Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, Congressional Hispanic Caucus), which has enabled greater visibility of minority communities collectively.

A woman of many firsts, EBJ exemplifies the core values of leadership, including the willingness to break glass ceilings and overcoming adversity. She is a strong advocate for the need to invest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education.

In 2019, the city of Dallas renamed its Union Station to the Eddie Bernice Johnson Union Station to honor the Congresswoman’s immense support for the public transportation system and ensuring the system effectively supports its constituents who rely on it for transportation.

Thank you, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, for your continued service to our community and country.

— Congressional Black Caucus
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SpaceX crew docks after historic commercial transportation launch with NASA

HAWTHORNE, CA — Space Exploration Technologies Corp., trading as SpaceX, is a private American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company founded in 2002 by Elon Musk. Musk, also the CEO of Tesla, set a goal of reducing space transportation costs enabling the colonization of Mars.

The successful docking of SpaceX’s Dragon Endeavour spacecraft with the International Space Station (ISS), crewed by NASA astronauts (L-R cover and inset photos) Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley, is another major milestone for Demo-2’s historic mission.

The spacecraft launched atop a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Kennedy Space Center Saturday, May 30. The mission is the first time astronauts have launched from American soil since the final Space Shuttle flight in 2011.

The mission is also the first time a private company, rather than a national government, has sent NASA astronauts into orbit. NASA’s Commercial Crew Program is working with the American aerospace industry as companies develop and operate a new generation of spacecraft and launch systems capable of carrying crews to low-Earth orbit and the International Space Station. Commercial transportation to and from the station will provide expanded utility, additional research time and broader opportunities for discovery on the orbiting laboratory.

The station is a critical testbed for NASA to understand and overcome the challenges of long-duration spaceflight. As commercial companies focus on providing human transportation services to and from low-Earth orbit, NASA is freed up to focus on building spacecraft and rockets for deep space missions.

The Commercial Crew Program represents a revolutionary approach to government and commercial collaborations for the advancement of space exploration.

— Source and photos: NASA and SpaceX

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