



Firefly Aerospace Completes Preliminary Design Review for NASA MoonFall Mission

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Milestone moves Firefly's Elytra spacecraft toward final design and hardware production to deliver NASA JPL drones above the lunar south pole

Firefly MoonFall Deployment



Rendering of Firefly's Elytra spacecraft deploying JPL drones above the Moon's south pole.



CEDAR PARK, Texas, Oct. 21, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Firefly Aerospace](#) (Nasdaq: FLY), a market leading space and defense technology company, today announced it completed the preliminary design review (PDR) for its Elytra spacecraft that will deliver drones built by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) to the Moon's south pole for the agency's [MoonFall mission](#).

Firefly's PDR, including members from NASA and JPL, conducted a thorough review of Elytra's structural, thermal, propulsion, avionics, trajectory design, guidance and navigation, communications and control systems as well as the spacecraft's qualification and environmental test plans. The review confirmed Elytra's design meets the mission requirements, and Firefly will now begin working toward the spacecraft's final critical design review (CDR) ahead of hardware production and assembly.

"Completing PDR less than four months after contract award is a testament to the speed and rigor Firefly brings to every mission," said Ray Allensworth, Vice President of Spacecraft at Firefly Aerospace. "As NASA accelerates its Moon Base Program, we're rapidly scaling spacecraft production to support MoonFall and a growing manifest of lunar surface missions, utilizing proven systems, hardware, and operations from our first successful Blue Ghost mission."

Targeted to be ready for launch by late 2028, MoonFall is part of the first phase of the Moon Base, a long-term lunar exploration and infrastructure initiative designed to enable sustained human presence and expanded scientific and commercial activity at the lunar south pole.

JPL is building the drones and managing the mission for NASA, which will source the launch vehicle for MoonFall. After launching, Firefly's Elytra spacecraft will transit from Earth orbit to lunar orbit and deploy the drones above the Moon's south pole. The MoonFall drones will then use their high-definition optical cameras and instruments to survey the south pole terrain and map safe landing spots and resources to support future human missions.

About Firefly Aerospace

Firefly Aerospace is a space and defense technology company on a mission to reliably and repeatedly launch, land, and operate space systems from Earth to the Moon and beyond. As the partner of choice for responsive space missions, Firefly is the first commercial company to launch a satellite to orbit with approximately 24-hour notice and the first to achieve a successful landing on the Moon. Established in 2017, Firefly's engineering, manufacturing, and test facilities are co-located in central Texas to enable rapid innovation and vertical integration for the company's small- to medium-lift launch vehicles, lunar landers, and orbital vehicles. For more information, visit www.fireflyspace.com.

Forward-Looking Statement

This press release contains "forward-looking statements" including, but not limited to, statements regarding timing of the MoonFall mission, Elytra and drone performance specifics and capabilities, statements of Firefly's Vice President of Spacecraft, and other statements regarding Firefly's future expectations, beliefs, plans, objectives, financial condition, assumptions, future events, or performance that are not historical facts. In some cases, you can identify forward-looking statements because they contain words such as "allows," "enable," "may," "position," "will," "expects," "plans," "anticipates," "could," "would," "target," "set," "intends," "support," and "believes." There may also be negative words or other similar terms or expressions that concern our expectations, strategy, plans, or intentions. Not all forward-looking statements contain such identifying words. The inclusion of forward-looking statements should not be regarded as a representation that such plans, estimates, or expectations will be achieved.

Various risks that could cause actual results to differ from those expressed by the forward-looking statements included in this press release include, but are not limited to: our failure to manage our growth effectively, including the increasing technological complexity of our business, and our ability to achieve and maintain profitability; the potential for delayed or failed launches, and any failure of our launch vehicles and spacecraft to operate as intended; our inability to deliver software on time or of a quality that our customers demand; the hazards and operational risks that our products and service offerings are exposed to, including the wide and unique range of risks due to the unpredictability of space; the inability to realize our backlog; the fluctuation of our operating results; adverse publicity stemming from any incident involving us, our competitors, or our customers; the failure to adequately protect our proprietary intellectual property rights; our inability to comply with our contractual obligations; and other risk factors set forth in our filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on the forward-looking statements contained herein, which speak only as of the date hereof. These statements are based on management's current expectations, assumptions, and beliefs concerning future developments, which are inherently subject to uncertainties, risks, and changes in circumstances that are difficult to predict. We cannot assure you that the events reflected in the forward-looking statements will occur; actual events could differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements. We undertake no intent or obligation to publicly update or revise any of the estimates and other forward-looking statements made in this announcement, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by law.

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A photo accompanying this announcement is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/566d99b1-e944-4d41-9c79-df910efa5210>