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## News Release

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# USGS Reduces Price for Landsat 7 Scenes

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is reducing the price of Landsat 7 scenes with gaps in data resulting from a satellite anomaly in May of 2003. Scenes that contain gaps in data will be reduced from \$600 to \$250. Scenes with the gaps filled in using data acquired prior to the anomaly will also be offered at a reduced price of \$275 beginning May 10, 2004.

The new product being offered for \$275 will have the gap areas filled in with Landsat 7 data acquired prior to the scan line corrector (SLC) failure at a similar time of the year. The two scenes are geometrically registered, and a histogram matching technique is applied to the fill pixels that provide the best-expected radiance values for the missing data.

The new product represents an effort by the USGS Landsat 7 Project at the EROS Data Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota to increase the utility of the Landsat 7 Enhanced Thematic Mapper Plus (ETM+) data affected by the non-functional scan line corrector

The USGS is continuing to research other methods of providing better merged data products and will continue to provide information resulting from this work as it becomes available.

A sample product, with a comparison of the degraded data, further information, a complete list of the new pricing structure, and regular updates on planned product releases can be found at [http://landsat7.usgs.gov/slc\\_enhancements/](http://landsat7.usgs.gov/slc_enhancements/).

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U.S. Department of the Interior  
U.S. Geological Survey

# NewsDigest

## Price of Landsat 7 Imagery Reduced to Boost Sales

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) slashed Landsat 7 imagery prices by more than 50 percent in response to a sharp drop in sales following a sensor malfunction in May 2003 that has degraded the quality of the data.

The loss of Landsat 7 revenue is expected to leave a shortfall in the USGS's satellite operations budget for 2004, agency spokesman Ron Beck said. The USGS estimates that Landsat 7 operations cost \$21 million annually and the Department of Interior provides \$10 million of that total. Satellite data sales are expected to make up the difference. Beck did not have specific figures on the shortfall, but in February, a USGS budget officer estimated that it could run as high as \$6 million.

Beginning May 10, the price for Landsat 7 scenes derived from newly collected data will drop from \$600 to \$250. Scenes that have been processed to fill the gaps caused by the sensor glitch will sell for \$275.

"The whole idea behind this is that a lot of the user community thinks Landsat 7 is completely dead," Beck said. "It's not, and even with the gaps, we're still getting 70 to 80 percent of the data from a scene."

## Japan Intends to Purchase U.S. Missile Interceptors

The Japanese government is hoping to buy \$725 million worth of ballistic missile interceptors and associated equipment from the Pentagon, according to a press release from the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency. The Pentagon notified Congress of the possible sale May 5. The sale would include nine Raytheon-built Standard Missile-3 rockets, which Japan will use to replace older or less reliable missiles in its current inventory.

## NASA Targets September for Exploration Vehicle Contracts

NASA hopes to award the first Crew Exploration Vehicle design contracts this year, but first must win congressional approval of a plan to reallocate part of its 2004 budget to jump-start its space exploration initiative.

Key House and Senate members are withholding approval of changes to NASA's 2004 operating plan until the agency answers more questions about its new space exploration plans. NASA wants to redirect some of the nearly \$1 billion Congress approved for the now-defunct Orbital Space Plane and Next Generation Launch Technology programs toward the Crew Exploration Vehicle, a key element of NASA's plans to return to the moon by 2020.

NASA's Exploration Systems enterprise intends to award multiple Crew Exploration Vehicle study contracts by Sept. 1, but will not be able to do so unless congressional appropriators sign off on changes to NASA's 2004 operating plan.

## Pentagon Reshuffles Offices For Space-Related Planning

U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Rand Fisher was assigned May 5 to the service's newly created position of program executive officer for space systems. In that capacity, Fisher, who previously headed the Pentagon's Transformational Communications Office, will be responsible for the Navy's existing satellites, acquiring new ones, and procuring commercial services.

The Transformational Communications Office, meanwhile, was formally folded into the U.S. Air Force's new National Security Space Office May 3. The new office also incorporates the former office of the National Security Space Architect and the National Security Space Integration directorate.

The National Security Space Office will be headed by Air Force Maj. Gen. Robert Kehler, with U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Richard Geraci and Jay Parness, a senior civilian intelligence official, serving as his deputies.

## NASA Approves Two New Explorer-Class Missions

NASA approved full-scale development of two Explorer-class missions designed to explore the Earth-space boundary, with launches scheduled for 2006.

The Aeronomy of Ice in the Mesosphere mission, led by a team at Hampton University in Virginia, will study the formation of Earth's highest-altitude clouds, which occur at the very edge of space. Scientists hypothesize that increased cloud formation in the

## Thirty-Rocket Ariane 5 Order Expected May 10

A long-awaited contract valued at 3 billion euros (\$3.6 billion) for the construction of 30 heavy-lift Ariane 5 rockets (right) was expected to be signed May 10 by the Arianespace launch consortium and Ariane 5 prime contractor EADS Space Transportation, according to European industry officials.

The 30 rockets will be equipped with the Vulcain 2 main-stage cryogenic engine, which failed in its December 2002 maiden flight and has since been redesigned. It is now being prepared for the first of two planned demonstration flights in September or October. A second demonstration flight is slated for the spring of 2005.

Twenty-five of the 30 vehicles will be equipped with a new cryogenic upper stage that never got the chance to prove itself during the failed 2002 mission. This engine is based on the design used for the upper stage of Europe's now-retired Ariane 4 rocket.

The 30 rockets will be delivered starting in 2005. In return for the contract, which has been in negotiation for more than a year, EADS Space Transportation and the rest of the Ariane 5 contracting team have agreed to reduce their costs to permit Arianespace to assemble, fuel and launch an Ariane 5 rocket for 136 million euros. The rocket is designed to carry two large telecommunications satellites weighing a combined 9,500-10,000 kilograms into geostationary transfer orbit, the destination of most commercial spacecraft.

In February, the European Space



Agency agreement for Ariane 5 program starts in 2004.

mesosphere may be an indication of global warming.

The Time History of Events and Macroscale Interactions during Substorms mission is intended to study space weather events that can affect satellites and terrestrial communications. The mission will fly five small spacecraft through geomagnetic disturbances to study the causes of the northern and southern lights.

## U.S. Army Anti-Missile Laser Destroys Biggest Target Yet

A U.S. Army system that uses high energy lasers to destroy incoming missiles intercepted its largest target to date May 4, according to a press release from prime contractor Northrop Grumman Corp.

The rocket destroyed in the test at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., has twice the

range, flies at a higher altitude, and carries a larger warhead than the Mobile Launcher Vehicle. According to the Army spokesman, the mission is intended to study space weather events that can affect satellites and terrestrial communications. The mission will fly five small spacecraft through geomagnetic disturbances to study the causes of the northern and southern lights.

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### CORRECT

The article on the Raytheon-based Radar should have mentioned that the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency is...