

ASTRONAUT SPEAKS AT DRAKA CABLETEQ MA



Photo courtesy Keith Simmons

Taunton, MA November 1, 2005 , Brewster Shaw, COO, United Space Alliance which is the prime contractor for NASA and the Kennedy Space Center, and three time Shuttle Astronaut, along with additional members of United Space Alliance's team visited Draka Cableteq USA, MA on October 26. As a longtime supplier to the United Space Alliance Draka Cableteq, MA, manufactures the cables that provide power to the Mobile Launch Pad (MLP)

Brian Breen, International Space Station (ISS) Associate Program Manager, spoke about the on going experiments taking place on the ISS that will continue until 2020. The space station is the size of a large house, and changes crews every six months. The crew currently consists of two members, by 2008 plans are to increase the crew members to six. Now aboard the ISS astronauts are working to improve life on Earth and extend life beyond our home planet.

Carol Farran, Director Subcontract Management, FL., expressed the need for quality and reliability in everything made specifically for the Space Shuttle. She spoke about the continual need for documentation of all procedures when manufacturing cables for the United Space Alliance. She reminded all assembled that it was essential that all cables supplied to the United Space Alliance be made to the exact specification, and if or when there is a change in the manufacturing procedure, it should be documented and approved by Draka Cableteq USA and United Space Alliance prior to any hardware production.

The cables produced by Draka for the United Space Alliance, power the Mobile Launch Platform which moves the Space Shuttle to the launch pad. "The MLP", stated Brewster Shaw, "is the lifeblood of the shuttle while it is on the launch pad. The MLP provides all essential power for all systems until launch".

The MLP is among the largest tracked vehicles ever constructed. The MLP is 131 feet long and 113 feet wide, 20 feet high and weighs 6 million pounds. It travels at the speed of one mile per hour when transporting the shuttle and can move up to speeds of 2 miles per hour when not loaded with the shuttle. It takes 6 hours to transport the shuttle to the launch pad.

Draka also makes the control cable that enables the system to explode the bolts that hold the Shuttle in place before the



Photo courtesy NASA

launch. Draka employees were treated to a first hand account by Brewster Shaw of what it was like to sit on the launch pad and wait for lift off. A gifted story teller, Shaw took his audience step by step through the process, from the exciting lift off to the exacting touch down. As a supplier to the United Space Alliance, Draka contributes to the success of each mission.



Draka Employees listen to Astronaut Brewster Shaw

Photo courtesy Keith Simmons

