

National

Engineers study possibilities

NASA plans space station

United Press International
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. —
aced with unprecedented
dget problems, space agency
engineers in Houston are lower-
ing their sights for what they hope
will become the nation's next big
space project — an orbiting space
station.

The goal remains the same — to
pitalize on the space shuttle's
nsportation capabilities and
nstruct a permanent modular
sembly able to support several
ople doing useful work for
onths at a time a few hundred
les above Earth.

Such a station, called a Space
erations Center by Johnson
ace Center engineers, would be
le to service satellites in orbit,
ve as a way station for space-
t bound for higher orbits or
ep space missions and conduct a
riety of research operations.

The basic plan that JSC en-
gineers have been studying for the
past couple of years has been a
station that would require six
space shuttle flights. That project

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— James Beggs, NASA
administrator.**

would have required peak annual
funding of well over \$1 billion.

In an effort to get the costs down
and get a space station in opera-
tion with fewer shuttle launch-
ings, a team directed by Allan
Louviere has come up with a new
concept that could get a station
working with perhaps two or three
shuttle flights and maximum
annual costs of an estimated \$700
million.

The plan, known as Concept C,
is still in the tentative thinking
stage, and has not yet been en-
dorsed by space agency officials.

NASA administrator James
Beggs said after he took over as
agency chief in July that any space
station plan would require lengthy
study before it could receive a go-
ahead. He said the Reagan admin-
istration appeared receptive to
such a station in a generalized way.

"Before we are going to get a
commitment from this adminis-
tration it will require that the thing
be studied thoroughly and the
budgetary effects of such a deci-
sion are clearly laid out," Beggs
said.

The money squeeze has since
worsened for NASA and agency
officials acknowledge that there
will be no money to start a space
station project for at least two or
three years.

But NASA officials are con-
vinced there will be a need for
such a permanent outpost in orbit
sooner or later.

Louviere said in a recent inter-
view in Houston that the newly
proposed station would start off
with the launch of a sun-power

energy module. It would be car-
ried into orbit in the 15-by-60
space shuttle cargo bay and once
in orbit would unfold large solar
panels to convert sunshine into
electricity.

He said the energy module,
which might be 11.5 feet in di-
ameter and 10 feet long, would fly
unmanned for a while. Then
NASA would use the shuttle to
carry up a command module up to
14 feet in diameter and 40 feet
long.

This would be manned by two
or three people and, once hooked
up to the energy module, would
be able to begin limited opera-
tions in space. It would be fol-
lowed by the launch of an identical
module that would increase the
station's capability to four to six
people and provide extra redun-
dancy for safety.

Louviere, who has worked on
space station plans since 1964,
said the modules could be manu-
factured in smaller segments with
common systems to reduce con-
struction costs and simplify in-
orbit maintenance.

Smaller modules also could be
constructed and placed in hard-
to-reach orbits such as the north-
south polar orbits the Defense
Department uses for military sur-
veillance spacecraft.

By starting off on a small, step-
by-step scale, Louviere said im-
provements and changes could be
as the station was enlarged.

"We think this offers a lot of
potential," he said. "You can
aggregate a lot of operational ca-
pabilities."

Saudis find AWACS sale also includes fine print

United Press International
WASHINGTON — As the
applause dies away and the
house lights come up, all sides
have begun to look at the cost of
the presidential victory on the
sale of AWACS radar planes to
Saudi Arabia.

Although a defeat would
have been immeasurably more
expensive, victory also has its
price.

In the general celebration
about the administration's Sen-
ate victory, one point has been
overlooked that may come back
to haunt the Saudis and the
Americans.

The congressional failure to
disapprove the \$8.5 million deal
does not require the president
to sell the airplanes and the
additional equipment. It only
permits him to go ahead with
the sale.

In the fine print, the Saudis
are now discovering, is an obli-
gation for the kingdom to give
up its present aloof attitude
about the Middle East negotia-
tions.

"What we are really saying is
simply that we will not deliver
the aircraft if at that time there

has been no progress toward the
peace process," White House
chief of staff James Baker said
the day after the Senate vote.
The delivery is scheduled in
late 1985.

In fact, President Reagan's
letter to the Senate outlining
the sale arrangements says the
planes will be delivered only if
there is peace or progress to-
ward it with the substantial
assistance of Saudi Arabia.

At some point, the Saudi
monarchy is going to have to
realize it will not receive the
U.S. planes unless it takes
approximately the same step
that Anwar Sadat took by recog-
nizing the reality of the state of
Israel and dealing with it.

That will be a risky and auda-
cious step for the Saudi royal
family, which remains in power
because it is seen to be the
keeper of Moslem orthodoxy
and Arab ideological purity.

In terms of relations with
Israel, the price is equally un-
certain. It is known that the
president, in the wake of the
sale, renewed the commitment
that the United States will not
permit Israel's technical mit-

ary edge to be eroded.

That letter to Israel can be
seen as a blank check that will
add some amount — no one can
say how much — to the \$2.2
billion in gifts and loans the
United States makes to Israel every
year.

At home, both the White
House and the members of the
Senate who changed their votes
in the final hours of the debate
insist there was no political
horse-trading involved. But
such an intensive campaign for
votes always implies a contract.

That unwritten agreement
says that the White House will
return the favor some day.
Perhaps it will require only a
presidential appearance at a
fund-raiser, or favorable con-
sideration of a candidate for a
judgeship or an embassy, but
such IOUs are the invisible cur-
rency of power politics in
Washington.

Both sides of the implied, un-
written contract are aware of it
and a violated agreement —
even though unspoken — can
create a blood feud.



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24-month safety record reached by U.S. airlines

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Federal Aviation Administration said U.S. airlines set a new safety record Saturday by going 24 months without a fatal accident involving a large passenger jet.

The last fatal accident involving a passenger jet operated by a U.S. airline occurred Oct. 31, 1979, in Mexico City. In that accident, only 17 of the 87 people aboard survived when a DC-10 landed on a closed runway.

The previous record covered an

18-month period, from February 1964 to August 1965.

The new record was set during a period when airlines flew more than half a billion passengers on 10 million flights, which works out to half a trillion revenue passenger miles — enough to take every man, woman and child in the United States on a flight of more than 2,000 miles.

During most of this period, up to the start of the air traffic controllers strike, there was an airliner taking off somewhere in the coun-

try once every six seconds.

In the same 24 months, there were only two fatal accidents involving any kind of aircraft operated by the country's scheduled flag, trunk and local service airlines. One was on June 12, 1980,

when 13 people were killed in an accident involving a small twin-turbo prop plane. The other was on Jan. 20, 1981, when seven people were killed in another small propeller-driven aircraft.

TV producers clean up with soap opera products

United Press International
NEW YORK — Soap operas these days are seen not only on television but on everything from T-shirts to night shirts — a new bonanza for the licensing industry that now brings in \$10 billion at retail.

ABC Merchandising, Inc., Procter & Gamble, Columbia Pictures Industries and a number of independent producers of television soap operas are licensing rights to the titles and characters of their shows to makers of a wide range of products.

ABC alone is licensing merchandise with a retail value of \$5 million on its soapy serials this year, said Denise Shapiro, associate director of ABC Merchandising.

Merchandise licensing of soap operas actually grew out of the successful sale of novelizations of the serial programs in book form, which began about five years ago, said Glen Dyckoff of Columbia Pictures.

He said Columbia now licenses about 20 merchandise items, including jigsaw puzzles and apparel, under the names of its two current soap operas.

Licensing of merchandise tied to the company's six soap operas is quite new and so far has been limited pretty much to T-shirts and night shirts, said Sydney McHugh of Procter & Gamble.

"All I can tell you about the results, so far, is that we are quite pleased with the sales," she said.

General Hospital is king of the soap operas from the licensing point of view, said Shapiro of ABC. "The green General Hospital scrub suits are outselling everything else."

There was little or no licensing of merchandise by the programs in the heyday of radio soap operas in the 1930s and '40s. Licensing promotions then were confined to shows like Superman, the Lone Ranger and Edgar Bergen's Charlie McCarthy show.

Shapiro said film merchandise

licensing was given its big impetus by the late Walt Disney — with Mickey Mouse and his other cartoon characters. It flourished after World War II with the Davy Crockett, Beatles and other promotions.

The radio soap operas did not have the visual appeal symbols for merchandise licensing of the bigger shows and it took a long time for the televised soap opera to achieve a big hold on daytime viewers.

But now, they are watched by at least 40 million persons every week and most of them have succeeded in attracting fanatical viewer followings to whom it is easy to sell licensed goods, Shapiro said.

She added the manufacturer wasn't enthusiastic when she first suggested promoting the green scrub suit from General Hospital. But when he read that young fans of the soap opera were stealing the scrub suits from hospital linen rooms, he was sold on the idea.

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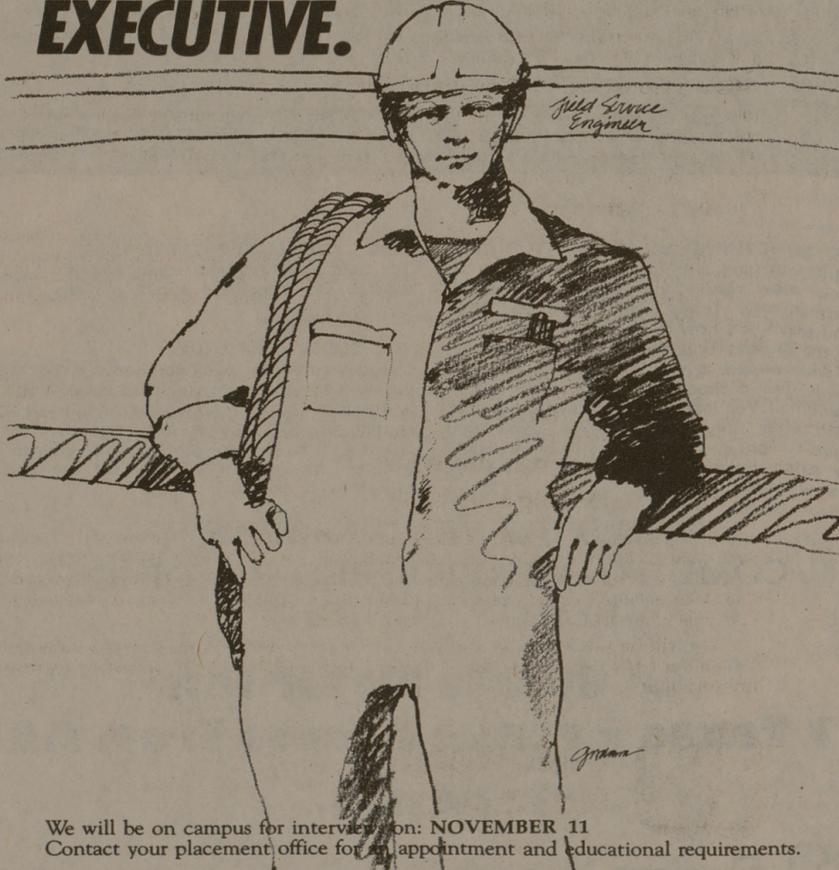
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