

Space shuttle Discovery gets it right on fourth try

The Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — On its fourth try, Discovery roared away on a satellite-delivery mission Sunday with five astronauts jubilant to be in space at last.

"Hey Houston, I gotta tell ya, you've never seen five happier guys up here," commander Frank Culbertson Jr. told Mission Control. "It's been a long time coming."

Culbertson and his crew quickly be-

gan preparing for their first major job in orbit — releasing an experimental communications satellite.

The Advanced Communications Technology Satellite was to be ejected from Discovery eight hours into the flight.

An attached rocket was to propel the satellite from Discovery's 184-mile-high orbit to an altitude of 22,300 miles.

Discovery's flight had been delayed five times since mid-July for equipment failures, payload concerns and even a meteor shower.

Two of the three earlier countdowns had been halted in the final 19 seconds.

This time — countdown No. 4 — everything worked and Discovery rose promptly at 7:45 a.m. from its seaside launch pad.

Two engine pump sensors failed on the way up, but that posed no problem since identical sensors worked fine, said launch director Bob Sieck.

If one of those sensors had failed prior to launch, however, it would have meant another aborted launch.

A broken fuel-flow sensor caused last month's engine shutdown three seconds before liftoff.

It is NASA's 57th shuttle mission and the fifth this year.

Besides deploying the communications satellite and an ultraviolet telescope, the crew is to conduct a spacewalk to test tools needed for the Hubble Space Telescope repair mission in December. Five and possibly seven spacewalks are planned for the telescope repair mission.

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Racial politics intense in Memphis

Mayor proposes merger of mostly black city, white suburbs

The Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — It would be hard to find another American city where skin color plays a bigger political role, or one where its first elected black mayor is putting voters' racial beliefs to a bigger test.

Less than two years after blacks first passed whites in voter registrations in Memphis, Mayor W.W. Herenton is on a course that could shift the city back to majority white.

Friend and foe alike are concerned.

Herenton wants to merge his predominantly black city with the well-to-do, mostly white suburbs that make up the rest of Shelby County. Without such a move, he says, the strains of a limited tax base could one day turn Memphis into a poor, black

enclave surrounded by rich, white suburbs.

Herenton wants to consolidate the city and county governments, which now have separate mayors, law-making boards, bureaucracies, schools and tax structures.

Suburban residents have long opposed consolidation. City voters have supported it in the past. But the shift in the city's racial makeup has added a new wrinkle.

"I'm stunned," said John Ford, a black state senator whose family runs one of the city's most active political organizations; his brother is U.S. Rep. Harold Ford, D-Tenn. "Who in the world is it he's talked to that's told him to think this way? ... You'd have to be a plumb fool to think this up on your own."

Herenton, 53, the city's first black superintendent of schools before becoming mayor, says

blacks gain little by controlling a city that is broke.

Overall, Shelby County, which includes Memphis, is 55 percent white. The city, with 610,000 residents, is 55 percent black. The suburbs, with 216,000 residents, are mostly white, but specific percentages are not available.

Memphis schools are 80 percent black, the suburban schools 80 percent white.

Blacks outnumbered whites in registered voters for the first time in 1991, the year Herenton was elected by a margin of 142 votes out of the 247,973 cast.

He got 99 percent of the black vote, while his white opponent, former mayor Richard Hackett, got 97 percent of the white vote.

The same election raised the number of blacks on the 13-member City Council from three to six and on the nine-member city school board from three to five.

Police to patrol Corsicana school campuses

The Associated Press

CORSICANA — Corsicana School District officials have decided to increase security at all district campuses following a brawl at an elementary school that police say was racially motivated.

"I think the most important thing to let people know is that

we are not going to put up with any misbehavior on our campuses," said Corsicana school superintendent Jim Dickson.

In addition, school administrators at a meeting Saturday agreed to take a "zero tolerance" position toward violence such as that which occurred last week.

Dickson said the action was taken to "ensure a safe environment for the education of all our young people on every district campus."

One teacher and four police officers — including Corsicana Police Chief G.M. Cox — were injured in Thursday's melee that interrupted an open house at Lincoln Elementary School.

Witnesses said that 15 to 20 young black men had shouted, "No peace, no justice" as they ran through the elementary school's halls, then fought with police who tried to apprehend them.

Police say they believe the incident was planned and racially motivated.

The confrontation at Lincoln was preceded Thursday by a problem at Collins Middle School. The principal, attempting to break up a fight between a black student

and a white student, was struck by a student.

Officials said they did not know whether there was a connection between the incidents.

Tension in the city about 60 miles southeast of Dallas has been high since a black man died while in white police officers' custody on June 5. Two officers who had been fired for their involvement in the arrest of 29-year-old Craig Thomas were reinstated and returned to work Tuesday.

Police officers will begin patrolling school campuses Monday, said Corsicana police Sgt. Ladena Baggett. The Corsicana Police Department and the Navarro County Sheriff's Department both have agreed to provide law enforcement officers on every district campus, Dickson said.

Dickson said he has encouraged school personnel to "use whatever force is reasonably necessary to protect themselves, the students and school property" should other incidents occur.

He also re-enforced the district's discipline policy, emphasizing that any violations would result in swift disciplinary action.

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