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ESTES HONORED FOR WORK ON INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

UCSB Professor has advised NASA for

more than 10 years

John E. Estes, professor of geography at the University of California, Santa Barbara, received a NASA commendation recently for his work with the agency's Space Utilization Advisory Subcommittee.

The award marks the successful launching late last year of the first elements of the International Space Station, a U.S.-led project involving 15 other countries to place an orbiting outpost where scientists may live and conduct experiments.

"The station is a very complex undertaking and this committee performs an important service," said Estes, the longest-serving member of the committee at this time. "We provide NASA advice concerning potential science utilization of the station. Basically, we have tried to insure that as the ISS design turns into engineering reality, we get the maximum science 'bang' for the taxpayers' buck."

A committee member since 1988, Estes' task with this project is "to try to make sure that the Earth observations community has a good capability to employ ISS assets." Part of the space station's role is to allow scientists to monitor the planet, recording data on such things as weather phenomena, volcanic eruptions, changes in lake and ocean levels, and dust storms.

According to NASA, the space shuttle Discovery is expected next month to embark on the STS-96 mission. A multinational crew of seven astronauts will return to the station in a logistics resupply flight, which will include at least one space walk to attach additional hardware to the new orbiting facility.

In all, the shuttle and two types of Russian rockets will conduct 45 missions to launch and assemble the more than 100 elements that make up the completed International Space Station. Some 460 tons of structures, modules, equipment and supplies will be placed in orbit by the year 2004.

In January 2000, an international crew of three will begin living aboard the International Space Station, starting a permanent human presence aboard the outpost.

A UC Santa Barbara faculty member since 1969, Estes is director of the university's Remote Sensing Research Unit. He holds a Ph.D. in geography from UCLA.

Estes' long-standing association with NASA includes a stint as a visiting scientist at the space agency's headquarters. From 1992 to 1995, he was director and senior visiting scientist for the Universities Earth Sciences Program of the Universities Space Research Association.

Estes was honored by his peers in the Association of American Geographers last December with the group's Lifetime Achievement Honors. The professional society boasts 6,000 members.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.