

ASTROBOTIC



Astrobotic Unveils New 47,000 sq. ft. Headquarters in Pittsburgh, PA

Astrobotic, space robotics company, opens one of the largest private facilities in the world dedicated to lunar operations

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Astrobotic officially opened its new headquarters in Pittsburgh in a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Monday. The 47,000 square foot complex is the largest private facility in the world dedicated to lunar logistics. Astrobotic's Peregrine and Griffin lunar landers will be built on-site, with Peregrine set to become the first commercial mission to the Moon, and the first American lander on the Moon since the Apollo missions.

"I like to say we're a 13-year overnight success story," said Astrobotic CEO John Thornton. "In the past eighteen months, we grew from a staff of 18 to more than 100 employees, with two funded lander missions and a rover mission to the

Moon, and multiple contracts to develop exciting new space technologies. It's still surreal."

Monday's ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by a wide range of prominent federal, state, and local officials, including U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, U.S. Congressman Conor Lamb, Pennsylvania Governor's Action Team SW Director Eric Bitar, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, and Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto. They were joined by local business and community leaders LaShawn Burton Faulk, Executive Director of Manchester Citizens Corporation, Sam Reiman, Director of the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and David Malone, Chairman and CEO of Gateway Financial.

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U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross delivers remarks to a socially-distanced crowd at Astrobotic's grand opening ceremony.

“You [Astrobotic] are currently leading the market with seventeen contracts in place for your first mission with customers in seven countries,” said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. “The Commerce Department will continue to make resources available to you and to the broader U.S. commercial space industry to ensure that we remain the leader in space commerce.”

Astrobotic's headquarters houses offices, labs, and fabrication areas, including a “clean room” and “high bay” required for final spacecraft assembly. Astrobotic will use the facility to build its lines of landers, rovers, autonomous spacecraft navigation systems, and other space technologies. The facility will also be used to operate them. When Peregrine lands on the Moon next year, it will be controlled

directly from the Astrobotic Mission Control Center inside the Pittsburgh headquarters. Phase two of the headquarters' construction, now underway, will add a rover test pit, a drone flying arena, a public gathering space, additional offices that will seat 150 employees, labs, and fabrication spaces.

The opening of the headquarters marks a major milestone in the company's history. After its inception as a private company spinoff from Carnegie Mellon University's Robotics Institute, Astrobotic started in a 400 square foot room above a bagel shop in Pittsburgh's Oakland neighborhood. It later moved to a former steel-stamping factory in the Strip District, and then an office building downtown. The company grew rapidly last year after winning a \$79.5 million NASA contract to fly scientific instruments aboard Peregrine, and again in June by winning a \$199.5 million contract to deliver NASA's water-hunting rover, VIPER, to the south pole of the Moon. In addition to NASA, Astrobotic has signed fifteen commercial customers representing seven countries for its lunar payload delivery service.

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LEFT: Pictured left to right: Dan Hendrickson, Astrobotic Vice President of Business Development; David Malone, Chairman and CEO of Gateway Financial; U.S. Congressman Conor Lamb; Sharad Bhaskaran, Astrobotic Mission Director for Peregrine Mission One. RIGHT: LaShawn Burton Falk, Executive Director of Manchester Citizens Corporation, provides comments to the Astrobotic film crew.

“The first Astrobotic mission, which will fly on Peregrine, will deliver about a dozen NASA-developed payloads to a mid-latitude region on the Moon. These NASA-developed payloads will range in capabilities from technologies to demonstrations, demonstrate functionality in the unique environment of the Moon. We’ll also fly science instruments, so we’ll obtain important scientific data to help inform our future exploration missions,” said Ryan Stephan, NASA Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) Payload Integration Manager.

“I personally want to thank all the folks at Astrobotic for taking on this national mission. You are a big part of our strategy going forward to be a successful, strong, growing economy in a country that is well-defended and well-represented in space. So thank you very much, we’re proud of you,” said U.S. Congressman Conor Lamb.

Astrobotic’s new headquarters is located in Pittsburgh’s Northside, home to five historical districts. The headquarters is within a mile of several popular cultural destinations, including the Carnegie Science Center, Heinz Field, Stage AE, the National Aviary, and the Children’s Museum.

“The innovation sector in Pennsylvania, and especially here in Pittsburgh, has been a powerhouse for the Commonwealth. And that’s thanks to companies like Astrobotic who have operated and grown here in Pittsburgh since their founding thirteen years ago. ...Astrobotic is at the forefront of developing advanced robotics for lunar operations that will help propel the industry into the future and further cement Pittsburgh’s status as an international hub,” said Eric Bitar, Governor’s Action Team (GAT) SW Director.

“It’s really a story about what Pittsburgh has always been,” said Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. “We’ve always been a place of innovation. Always a place of the next technology...”

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“I was five years old when we landed on the Moon. By the time I was six years old, I could name every planet. And that is an opportunity that is now down the street for every young Pittsburgh child. This is the technology of the engineers, and the dreamers, and the scientists from our region. And this is the product that you [Astrobotic] have given us to give to the world,” said Mayor Bill Peduto, Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto addresses the crowd.

“Technology and robotics give Pittsburgh a competitive edge, and companies like Astrobotic – a venture that’s successfully commercialized its advanced space robotics capabilities and is a rising star – are catalyzing interest in Pittsburgh, creating job growth and carrying the banner for this region’s unrelenting drive to innovate, shape the world and own the future,” said Mark Anthony Thomas, president of the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance, the region’s economic development organization. “As one of the largest private facilities of its kind anywhere, Astrobotic’s new headquarters and lunar operations facility is proof that remarkable things are happening in Pittsburgh.”

At the opening ceremony, and as Astrobotic employees return to work at the new facility, the company has required masks and limited building capacity to allow for greater social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Astrobotic has also enlisted Checklist Facility Maintenance cleaning services to maintain high sanitary standards. ■



Ander Solorzano, Astrobotic Systems Engineer, stands beside the Peregrine Structural Test Model.