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National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Huntsville, Alabama

Ground breaking ceremony
MSFC Lab & Office Building
10:15 a.m., September 30, 1961

Senator Kerr:

Distinguished members of the Alabama Legislature:

Mayor Searcy:

Mr. Stone:

General Hurst:

And distinguished guests:

On behalf of the NASA-Marshall Space Flight Center, I am delighted to welcome you today to this bare plot of ground on which soon will rise another landmark on the road to space.

We are fortunate that the Chairman of the Senate committee on Aeronautical and Space Sciences, Senator Robert S. Kerr of Oklahoma, is with us for today's little ceremony.

I can't think of anyone more appropriate than Senator Kerr to help us break ground today.

I'll have to admit, Senator -- when we learned that you would be in Huntsville today -- we postponed our ground breaking ceremony for a couple of days. But I want you to know that we didn't hold up the job for a single minute. The building and the useful purposes it will serve mean too much to us and our space programs.

The new Central Office and Laboratory will house a number of important mission divisions: the Aeroballistics Division, the Research Projects Division, the Saturn Systems Office, Future Projects, Launch Operations Directorate and others.

If they put me up on that ninth floor like they say they are going to, I hope the elevators run a lot faster than some we have around here. Otherwise, we may never get off the ground on the way to the moon.

Briefly, the building will encompass a total area of 227,000 square feet of floor space, it will accomodate some 1200 people in the various laboratories and offices, and it will cost almost \$4 million.

I should like to express our appreciation to the many people, including you good taxpayers, who are responsible for this latest facility.

It will be a real boost to the NASA-Marshall Center space research and development programs.

First, I should like to thank Senator Kerr and his Congressional colleagues for their fine support. We also appreciate the help and encouragement of our own state, county and community officials and leaders, as well as the support of NASA headquarters.

To the U.S. Army Ordnance Missile Command we are grateful for making the land available, and for its cooperation in providing continuing valuable assistance and services.

I expect the Army is as glad as we are to see this building get underway, so we can finally vacate some of their own much needed facilities.

I should also like to thank the designers of the building, the Wyatt C. Hedrick firm of Fort Worth, Texas; and the builders, the Electronic and Missile Facilities, Incorporated, of New York City.

Again, please let me say how glad we are that all of you distinguished people could join with us for today's spadework.

I don't know just how much thrust that the Senator and I are going to generate with these shovels, but at any rate we'll invite you back in about 18 months to see the results.

Thank you.