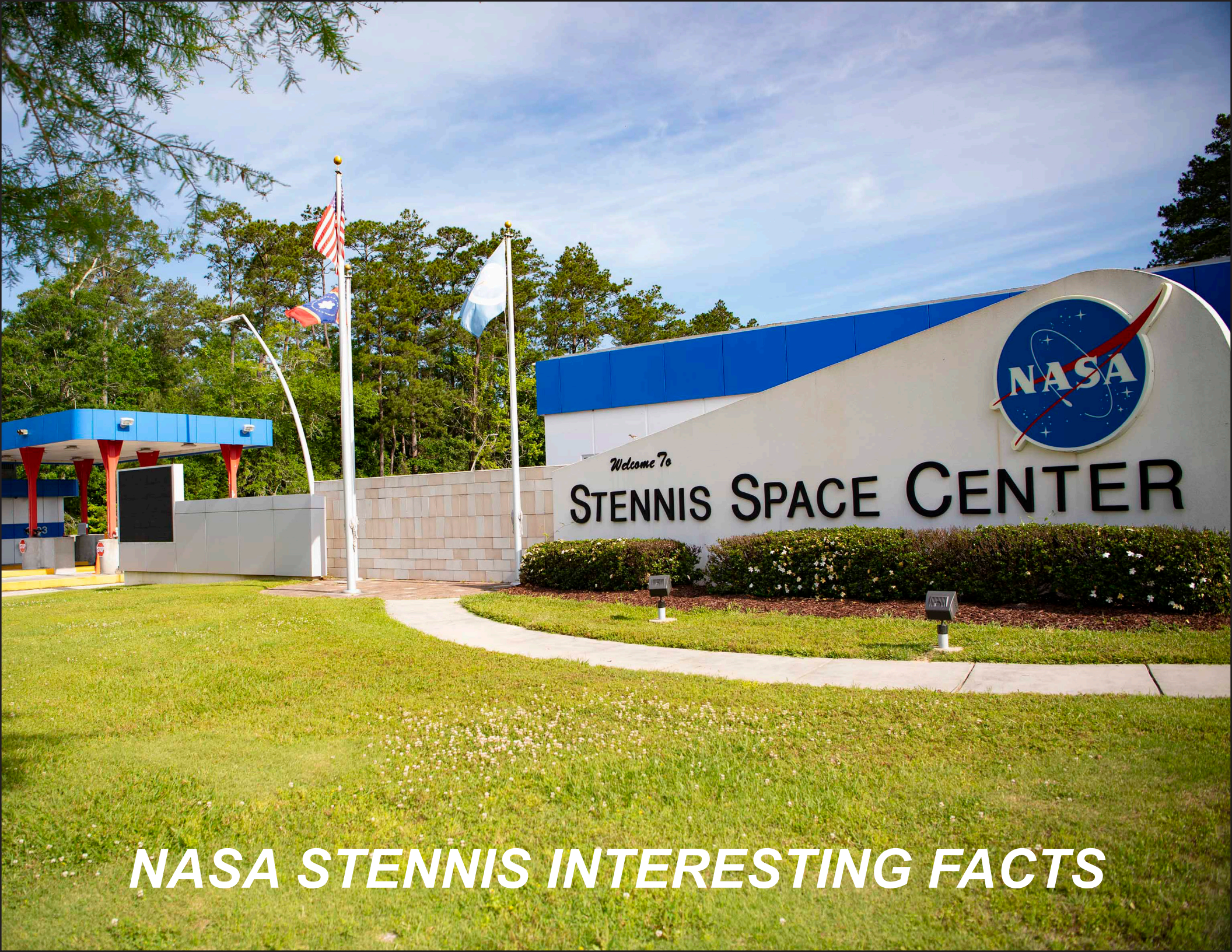

NASA STENNIS INTERESTING FACTS

For five decades and counting, NASA's Stennis Space Center in south Mississippi has served as the agency's primary rocket propulsion test site, providing test services for NASA and the Department of Defense, as well as the commercial sector. The site is home to NASA's Rocket Propulsion Test Program, which manages all of the agency's propulsion test facilities.

NASA Stennis was established in the 1960s to test first and second stages of the Saturn V rocket for the **Apollo lunar landing program**. NASA Stennis tested 27 Saturn V stages, including ones that carried humans to the Moon.

From 1975 to 2009, NASA Stennis tested main engines that powered 135 space shuttle missions – **2,307 shuttle main engine tests** in all for a total firing time of 820,475 seconds.

NASA Stennis is testing RS-25 engines and stages to help power NASA's new SLS (Space Launch System), which will return astronauts to the Moon as part of **the Artemis missions**. NASA Stennis also tested the core stage that powered the first SLS flight – Artemis I.

NASA Stennis works with a range of **commercial companies** to test the engines and components they need for their own space missions.

NASA Stennis is a major contributor to Gulf Coast economies in Louisiana and Mississippi. Its workforce numbers about 5,000. In 2022, the center had a direct economic impact of **more than $715 million** within a 50-mile radius.

INFINITY Science Center located just outside of NASA Stennis serves as the site's official visitors facility. The 72,000-square-foot facility highlights work done at the site in support of the nation's space program.

An active Office of Technology Development at NASA Stennis works to develop and share **space-related technologies that benefit daily life**. The branch also partners with schools, libraries and institutions to help tell the story of how NASA is benefiting all of life.

NASA Stennis is expanding its role in the design, testing, and deployment of **intelligent and autonomous systems** for the agency, working on the types of systems needed for critical ground and space-based missions.

NASA Stennis consists of two defined areas – a **13,800-acre area** that is home to all site facilities and a surrounding **125,000-acre buffer zone** protecting against the noise and power of large rocket engine and stage tests.

Seven-and-one-half miles of canal waterways, featuring a lock system, are used at NASA Stennis to transport large rocket stages and cryogenic barges to and from the Gulf of Mexico via the Pearl River.

About 40 federal, state, academic and private organizations and several technology-based companies, including the U.S. Navy, conduct business at NASA Stennis. The entities share facility operating costs, making it more cost-effective for each one to accomplish its independent mission.

NASA announced plans to build a rocket engine test site in Hancock County on **October 25, 1961.** Tree-cutting for construction began **May 17, 1963**. The first hot fire test was conducted on **April 23, 1966**.

The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics named NASA Stennis a **historic aerospace site** in April 2008.

Front image – Access to NASA's Stennis Space Center is controlled through a pair of security gates on the north and south ends of the site.