

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and NASA Leadership Join Ribbon-Cutting at New Intuitive Machines Facilities

Burns & McDonnell Provided Design-Build Services for New Facilities to Support Intuitive Machines' Mission to the Moon

HOUSTON, Texas — [Intuitive Machines](#), a leading space exploration, infrastructure and service company, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate its new headquarters and flame range test facility, which will further support its [mission to the moon](#). [Burns & McDonnell](#), a 100% employee-owned engineering, construction and architecture firm, provided design-build services for the facilities.

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and NASA leadership attended the ceremony.

The new 105,572-square-foot headquarters will serve as the operations center for the company's lunar program, which will send the first American spacecraft to the surface of the moon since the Apollo program in 1972 and will send one of the first spacecraft ever to reach the lunar south pole.

Burns & McDonnell partnered with Intuitive Machines to develop the space needed in Houston for personnel to build, command and communicate with lunar vehicles and other sophisticated technology in space. Intuitive Machines holds several NASA contracts and has a goal of being the first private company to land on the moon.

"We wanted an iconic and dedicated space hub to represent our business and serve as a symbol of the future of space exploration, and Burns & McDonnell delivered just that," says Jack Fischer, vice president of production and operations, Intuitive Machines. "This highly customized base for our aspirations goes far beyond office space. It is an overarching complex with mission control, manufacturing and an advanced propulsion testing facility — the flame range — for the lunar lander engine. This was a facility and test area that didn't exist before, and now, fueled by innovation, we can bring our vision to life."

Intuitive Machines is one of three anchor tenants at the Houston Spaceport, and its project broke ground in 2021. Incorporated into the design are advanced manufacturing and production spaces, 3D printing areas, machine shops, research and development laboratories, clean rooms, and large-scale spacecraft assembly areas.

Unique to the facility are mission control rooms to track and manage lunar missions, and a propulsion test facility to assess lunar lander engine capabilities. The headquarters also includes offices, meeting areas, conference rooms and other amenities.

The flame range facility is a unique structure, consisting of a 3,800-square-foot reinforced concrete chamber surrounded by a 25-foot-high perimeter wall that encloses an additional 6,500-square-foot yard and delivers multiple advantages for Intuitive Machines testing protocols. To be considered safe and ready for use, propulsion systems must meet stringent performance requirements, verified by a multitude of testing protocols.

The proximity of the testing facility to Intuitive Machines' manufacturing operations offers multiple benefits, beginning with significant savings in testing setup costs and streamlined logistics. Locating the testing facility next to the headquarters also allows Intuitive Machines to make adjustments quickly, utilizing all its manufacturing capabilities. With the ability to produce on-demand engine prototypes and parts, engineers can now conduct tests on even small, incremental changes in engine design.

"When your business is lean and your goal is to be the first private company in history to land on the moon, your only choice is to pioneer something new," says Leslie Duke, Burns & McDonnell CEO-elect. "Our work is always about more than buildings; it is about solving our clients' challenges. While Burns & McDonnell is not designing or constructing a lunar lander, we have built the propulsion, processing, testing, technology, research and manufacturing facilities needed to empower Intuitive Machines to focus on safely opening access to the moon for progress of humanity."

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