

Advanced Manufacturing Technologies (AMT): Additive Manufactured Hot Fire Planning and Testing in GRC Cell 32 Project

Game Changing Development Program | Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD)



ABSTRACT

The objective of this project is to hot fire test an additively manufactured thrust chamber assembly TCA (injector and thrust chamber). GRC will install the additively manufactured Inconel 625 injector, two additively manufactured (SLM) water cooled Cu-Cr thrust chamber barrels and one additively manufactured (SLM) water cooled Cu-Cr thrust chamber nozzle on the test stand in Cell 32 and perform hot fire testing of the integrated TCA.

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

To NASA funded missions:

Cost Savings

- AR demonstrated 70% cost savings for the injector

Direct infusion

- NASA SMD and DOD use EELVs to launch payloads to orbit

- RL-10 is the upper stage engine for the Atlas V and Delta IV

- RL10 is the baseline engine for SLS ICPS and SLS 100t dual use upper stage

NASA strengthens the partnership with AR and extends NASA influence on RL10

TRL enhancement (3 to 5)

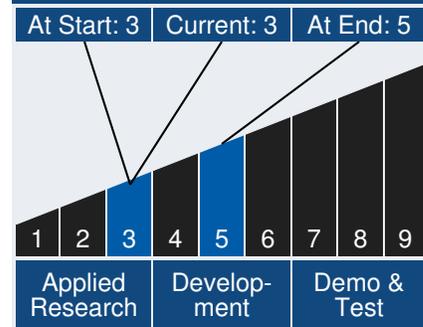
Increases NASA knowledge base of RL10 and cultivates experience that can be passed on as RL10 continues to evolve



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Technology Maturity



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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

GRC and AR have identified the following roles and responsibilities necessary to accomplish the hot fire objective of this task. AR will be responsible for delivering to GRC the additively manufactured thrust chamber components and injector, give input required for test plan documentation, participate in the test readiness review and give engineering support for hot fire testing. GRC will be responsible for preparing Cell 32 for testing, manufacturing all test support hardware, generating test plan documentation, conducting a test readiness review, conducting all hot fire operations and generating the final report.

AR will use SLM to manufacture all of the thrust chamber components necessary to perform this task. The two water cooled thrust chamber barrels and one water cooled nozzle will be constructed from Cu-Cr which is an alloy of interest for several engines in the AR product line. Following fabrication and post processing AR will conduct pretest inspections on the thrust chamber components to verify the builds. The Inconel 625 injector that will be used in this investigation is the same injector that was used in the MIP. AR has already conducted post-test inspections on this component to verify that it can be used in this work.

During the course of the MIP test campaign, AR working with GRC, identified several propellant feed system modifications necessary to be made to Cell 32. The modifications entail altering the feed system and main valve placement to facilitate easier engine operation. GRC facilities personnel have already coordinated with AR personnel to select components that can easily be integrated into the current test set-up in order to streamline the modification process.

Management Team

Program Executive:

- Ryan Stephan

Program Manager:

- Stephen Gaddis

Project Manager:

- John Vickers

Principal Investigator:

- LaNetra Tate

Technology Areas

Primary Technology Area:

Materials, Structures, Mechanical Systems & Manufacturing (TA12)

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To support hot fire testing GRC will fabricate several igniters and one heat sink copper thrust chamber. The design work for these components was completed under the MIP and drawings are already available. The heat sink thrust chamber will be used in early hot fire tests to verify that Cell 32 feed system modifications had the desired effect on engine operation. This will minimize risk to the AR Cu-Cr thrust chamber components and also allows additional instrumentation to be integrated into the test set-up. Data from this additional instrumentation will also be used to better understand the performance of the thrust chamber assembly after the heat sink hardware has been replaced by the water cooled SLM components.

To prepare for hot fire testing GRC, with AR input, will generate a test requirements document (TRD) to capture all of facility and test requirements necessary to ensure successful completion of the hot fire objective of this task. This document will contain a preliminary test matrix that outlines plans and the number of tests required to increase hot fire test duration from short ignition tests (~ 0.5 seconds) to longer duration (~30) second tests with minimal hardware risk. The longer duration tests should allow the TCA to achieve thermal equilibrium and allow preliminary insight into the effect, if any, that longer duration testing has on SLM fabricated TCA components. AR will be a signatory on the document to capture concurrence with the GRC test approach. The information in the TRD will be used as a basis for a test readiness review that will be conducted to allow GRC and AR management to review the test plans and give feedback before the team proceeds to hot fire testing.

Although GRC will be responsible for all hot fire testing operations, AR will provide on-site engineering test support during the course of hot fire testing. The on-site presence will allow GRC test engineers to coordinate with AR personnel to quickly review any data anomalies and make real time revisions to the test matrix should they be required. This approach was adopted during the MIP testing and allowed a significant amount of testing to be accomplished in a relatively short period of time thereby minimizing the cost of test operations. Following the completion of testing GRC will generate a final report summarizing the work accomplished during objective one of this task and deliver it to GCDP management.

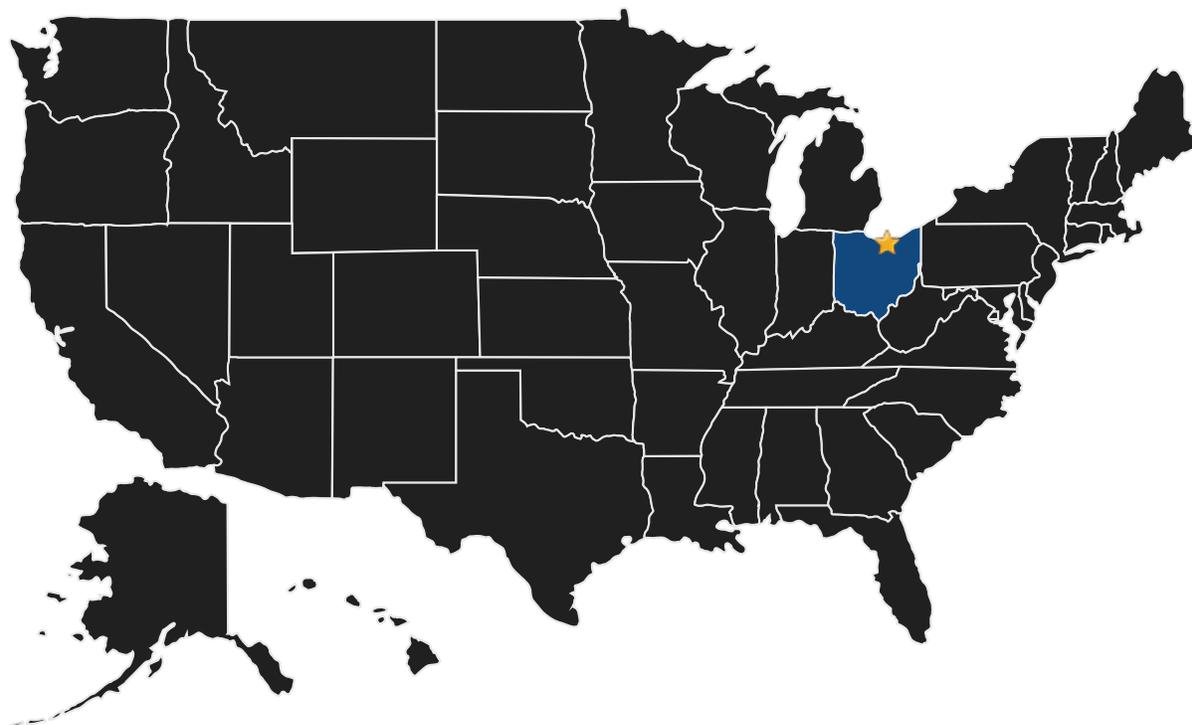
Active Project (2014 - 2015)

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U.S. LOCATIONS WORKING ON THIS PROJECT



■ U.S. States With Work

★ **Lead Center:**
Glenn Research Center

Contributing Partners:

- Aerojet Rocketdyne

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DETAILS FOR TECHNOLOGY 1

Technology Title

GRC Hot Fire Test

Technology Description

This technology is categorized as a hardware component or part for unmanned spaceflight

The objective of this project is to hot fire test an additively manufactured thrust chamber assembly TCA (injector and thrust chamber). GRC will install the additively manufactured Inconel 625 injector, two additively manufactured (SLM) water cooled Cu-Cr thrust chamber barrels and one additively manufactured (SLM) water cooled Cu-Cr thrust chamber nozzle on the test stand in Cell 32 and perform hot fire testing of the integrated TCA.

Capabilities Provided

- Additive manufacturing will reduce the cost of rocket engine components by eliminating touch labor resulting in more affordable access to space
- Aerojet-Rocketdyne (AR) has demonstrated a 70% cost savings for the injector and a similar level of savings is expected for the TCA
- Successful execution of this project would result in a shift from basic technology research to technology development and demonstration in a relevant environment (TRL 3 to 4/5)

Potential Applications

Successful hot-fire experiments will infuse additive manufacturing technologies into US rocket engine industrial base