**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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**NASA VISITS DOERFER – WHEELIFT IN WATERLOO TO CONNECT WITH STUDENTS INTERESTED IN TECHNOLOGY CAREERS**

WATERLOO, IOWA—NASA visited Doerfer - Wheelift’s headquarters in Waterloo, Iowa, today to tour the manufacturing facilities, talk to local students, and discuss the role of Wheelift’s heavy transporters for NASA’s Space Launch System (SLS).

 Wheelift has worked with NASA’s SLS since 2012 to provide the primary material handling transporters for SLS rocket assembly. The Wheelift transporters custom designed for NASA can safely carry loads up to 300 tons when all four transporters are used in tandem. They can carry heavy loads across both indoor and outdoor terrain.

 This morning, more than 150 middle school and high school students from Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Waverly schools toured The Rock—Doerfer’s Wheelift manufacturing facility—and learned about NASA’S SLS.

 “It’s important for students to know the opportunities that are out there,” said Dave Takes, Doerfer CEO. “Two of the NASA team members here today are Iowa born and raised, which shows these students the possibilities.”

 The students participated in a flag-raising ceremony with Colonel Kelly. Keiran Reynolds from Peet Junior High in Cedar Falls was randomly chosen to help with the ceremony and received a keepsake flag to take home.

The students also heard remarks from Dave Takes, CEO of Doerfer; Chris Bramon, who is originally from Marshalltown, Iowa, and now is an engineer at NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama; Patrick Whipps, team lead at NASA’s Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans, Louisiana; and Colonel Jim Kelly, astronaut and space shuttle pilot for NASA, who is originally from Burlington, Iowa.

“This is the world’s most powerful rocket,” said Bramon, as he explained the importance of the transporters to the SLS. “And it can’t go anywhere without Wheelift.”

“STEM fields—science, technology, engineering and math—are the tool belt that give you the opportunity to do cool stuff like this,” Whipps told the students. “You folks right here in Iowa are an important part of us finally going to Mars.”

Colonel Kelly discussed his background and how he became an astronaut, having grown up in a small Iowa town. He said, “I told my parents I was going to be an astronaut. Most people my age did back then. The only difference—I stuck with it—and had a lot of people help me along the way.” He also encouraged the students to strive for their goals, saying, “Any of you could be working on NASA programs. There’s only one person who can keep you from achieving your dreams—you.”

More information for the media, including photos and details about the SLS and Wheelift’s role, are available at <http://wheelift.com/resources-media/nasa>.

NASA’s Marshall Center manages the Space Launch System Program for NASA. To learn more about the SLS visit <http://www.nasa.gov/exploration/systems/sls/>.

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