

International Space Station status report: SS07-09

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

This week, the Expedition 14 crew continued to focus on preparation for their final planned spacewalk ahead of the space shuttle Atlantis's arrival in March. This comes following Sunday's unexpected circuit breaker trip on the International Space Station and subsequent resetting of affected equipment. As Atlantis was moved to the launch pad this week, station Commander Mike Lopez-Alegria and Flight Engineer Mikhail Tyurin conducted leak checks of the Russian Orlan spacesuits they will wear for their Feb. 22 venture outside the station. They installed some additional equipment on the suits, including lights that will assist in their tasks. Friday, the crew verified the suits' readiness by conducting telemetry and communications checks with flight controllers in Russia at the Mission Control Center in Korolev. The spacewalk will be the fifth by the Expedition 14 crew, a record for a station crew. It will be the fourth spacewalk conducted from the space station in the past three weeks. The spacewalk, scheduled to begin at approximately 4 a.m. CST, is expected to last six hours. NASA Television and www.nasa.gov will broadcast the event live, beginning at 3 a.m. The spacewalkers will attempt to free a stuck antenna on the Progress 23 cargo craft that is docked at the aft end of the station. The antenna did not properly retract when the supply vessel docked in October. Securing or removing the antenna is necessary to allow the Progress to undock in April. Additionally, they will survey docking navigation systems for the European Automated Transfer Vehicle, a cargo spacecraft scheduled to make its maiden voyage this summer. The spacewalk will be the 10th for Lopez-Alegria, a record for a U.S. astronaut. Also this week, robotics ground controllers in Houston commanded the station's mobile transporter rail car to move to the starboard side of the station's truss in preparation for the arrival of Atlantis, which will bring a new, school bus-sized truss segment with a third set of U.S. solar arrays for the complex, and batteries and other electronics. The crew will spend Monday inside the Destiny laboratory training on the operation of the station's Canadarm2 robotic arm.

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