Intuitive Machines Advances Space Nuclear Systems to Enable Lunar Night Survival

November 1, 2026

Successful START preliminary design review advances space nuclear technology toward flight and future lunar night survival

HOUSTON, Nov. 23, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Intuitive Machines, Inc. (Nasdaq: LUNR) (“Intuitive Machines”, together with its subsidiaries, the “Company”), a space infrastructure technology and services leader, today announced the successful completion of the preliminary design review for the Stirling Technology spAce Research experimenT (START). The successful review is a key milestone for START, which is being developed by Intuitive Machines in partnership with the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory’s (AFRL) Space Operations via Nuclear Enhanced Technology (SONET) team.

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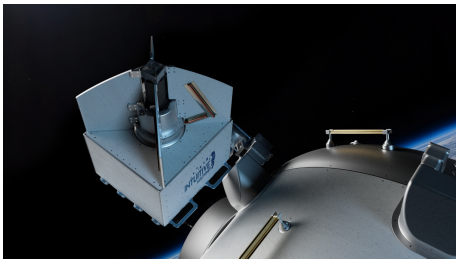
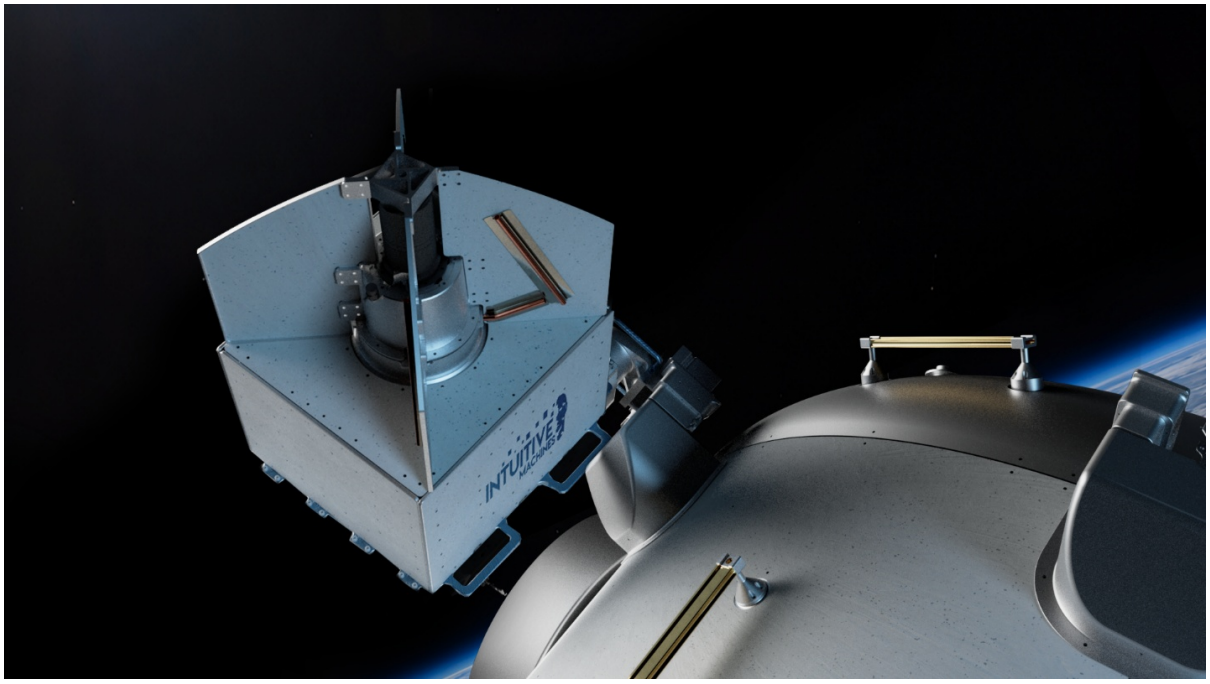


Conceptual rendering of the Stirling Technology spAce Research experimenT (START)



Conceptual rendering of the Stirling Technology spAce Research experimenT (START)

This collaboration between commercial industry and the Department of the Air Force aims to mature compact nuclear power technology toward flight readiness, benefitting America’s national space enterprise. It also advances Intuitive Machines’ strategically important development of space nuclear systems designed to enable longer-duration operations on the Moon and in deep space.

The partnership is part of Intuitive Machines’ previously announced $8.2 million contract extension from the AFRL/RJ to advance compact nuclear power technology toward flight readiness. The program is developing technologies intended to overcome the limitations of solar power and enable longer-duration missions on the Moon and deep space.

“Surviving the lunar night is a fundamental infrastructure challenge we have to solve if we want to operate on the Moon for weeks, months, and eventually years,” said Tim Crain, co-founder and CTO for Intuitive Machines. “Intuitive Machines is advancing space nuclear systems to provide the heat and power capabilities needed to extend mission duration and support sustained operations on the Moon for our customers.”

A lunar night lasts approximately 14 Earth days, creating prolonged periods without sunlight and exposing surface systems to extreme cold. These conditions present a fundamental challenge for spacecraft designed around solar power and batteries and limit how long systems can operate on the lunar surface.

START is designed to demonstrate Stirling power conversion technology in space, converting heat from a radioisotope source into electricity. As part of the AFRL/RJ program, the technology is slated to fly to the International Space Station (ISS) through the ISS National Laboratory in early 2028, using electrical power from the space station to simulate the heat from a radioisotope nuclear source.

About Intuitive Machines

Intuitive Machines is a next-generation space infrastructure company delivering integrated capabilities that build mission-critical spacecraft and systems, connect networks, and operate space infrastructure across Earth orbit, cislunar space, and deep space. Serving commercial, civil, and national security customers, the company enables resilient, scalable infrastructure that supports sustained exploration, communications, security, and commerce beyond Earth.

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release includes “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, as amended. These statements that do not relate to matters of historical fact should be considered forward looking. These forward-looking statements generally are identified by the words such as “anticipate,” “believe,” “continue,” “could,” “estimate,” “expect,” “intend,” “may,” “might,” “plan,” “possible,” “potential,” “predict,” “project,” “should,” “strive,” “would,” “strategy,” “outlook,” the negative of these words or other similar expressions, but the absence of these words does not mean that a statement is not forward-looking. These forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to, statements regarding the Company's expectations, plans, and objectives relating to its contract with the AFRL/RJ, including anticipated contract performance, scope of work, technical capabilities and deliverables, development activities, program milestones, schedules, funding, potential task orders or additional awards, expected revenue recognition, and the potential for future opportunities arising from or related to the contract; the Company's ability to successfully execute its obligations under the contract; and the anticipated strategic, operational, and financial benefits of the contract to the Company. These forward-looking statements reflect the Company’s predictions, projections, or expectations based upon currently available information and data. Our actual results, performance or achievements may differ materially from those expressed or implied by the forward-looking statements, and you are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward looking statements. The following important factors and uncertainties, among others, could cause actual outcomes or results to differ materially from those indicated by the forward-looking statements in this press release: our factors detailed under the section titled Part I, Item 1A. Risk Factors of our Annual Report on Form 10-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the “SEC”), the section titled Part I, Item 2, Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations and the section titled Part II. Item 1A. “Risk Factors” in our most recently filed Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q, and in our subsequent filings with the SEC, which are accessible on the SEC's website at www.sec.gov.

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A photo accompanying this announcement is available at https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/4c2eb2db-04fe-4e9d-b645-3abf1cff66ad