Intuitive Machines Secures $8.2 Million AFRL Contract Extension to Advance In-Space Nuclear Power Technology

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New funding accelerates space-based nuclear power toward flight readiness

HOUSTON, Oct. 30, 2025 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Intuitive Machines, Inc. (Nasdaq: LUNR), a leading space technology and infrastructure services company, today announced an $8.2 million contract extension from the U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory's Space Vehicles Directorate (AFRL/RV) to develop next-generation nuclear power systems for spacecraft and lunar infrastructure. Intuitive Machines is using the funding to accelerate readiness of compact nuclear power conversion technology that overcomes solar power limitations and enables lengthier missions on the Moon and in deep space.

The award builds on Intuitive Machines' earlier $9.5 million progress under a previous AFRL program, an initiative led by AFRL to develop compact nuclear power systems for space applications. That effort included the design of a Stirling-based power conversion system, which transforms heat from a radioisotope source into electricity. That phase culminated in a successful Preliminary Design Review by Intuitive Machines in September. With this new funding, the Company will begin preparing the system for flight, marking a critical step toward demonstrating space-based nuclear power in orbit.

Solar is the most pervasively used energy source to power today's space missions. However, current approaches limit mission duration in harsh environments like the two-week-long lunar night where temperatures fall below –200 Fahrenheit. These conditions prevent systems from operating without supplemental power systems like radioisotope thermoelectric generators or battery banks that add bulk, weight, and complexity to the mission footprint. Intuitive Machines believes demand is growing for reliable, scalable energy systems like Stirling engines, which offer continuous power and heat in a much smaller package to support spacecraft and planetary surface missions. Intuitive Machines is meeting that demand by building reliable, scalable energy systems that may power spacecraft and planetary surface missions beyond solar powered limitations.

"This award moves us from design to flight hardware, which is a critical step toward proving that compact nuclear power systems can survive and perform in space," said Tim Crain Ph.D., co-founder and chief growth officer for Intuitive Machines. "Because Intuitive Machines is vertically integrated across space data, infrastructure, and delivery services, we can rapidly innovate across the entire mission lifecycle and deliver compact, high-performance technologies and scalable solutions required for sustained operations in space."

START: Driving Sustainable Space Operations

The Stirling Technology spAce Research experimenT (START) is a flight experiment designed to demonstrate Stirling power conversion technology in space. While onboard the ISS National Laboratory, the Stirling system will be exposed to conditions that cause conventional power systems to degrade more quickly, limiting their operational lifespan and cutting missions short.

By flying the Stirling technology on the ISS National Lab, Intuitive Machines intends to raise the nuclear power technology system's readiness level from prototype to space-flown, which is a critical step toward commercial, civil, and national security space flight-ready acceptance. The Stirling technology is designed to support critical mission needs by delivering compact, continuous power in space. These capabilities are essential for enabling stealth spacecraft operations in national security missions, ensuring generators remain functional during prolonged darkness and extreme cold, and powering Position, Navigation, and Timing ("PNT") beacons with long-duration nuclear energy to support sustained lunar navigation. In addition, Intuitive Machines has been studying high powered nuclear fission-based systems under contract to the Department of Energy with funding provided by NASA's Fission Surface Power ("FSP") project.

"We believe the progress under the AFRL program strengthens our position for future nuclear power programs including NASA's FSP initiative," said Crain. "Maturing dynamic power conversion and control technologies that scale is how we evolve from a lunar delivery to a commercial infrastructure service provider on the Moon."

About Intuitive Machines

Intuitive Machines is a diversified space technology, infrastructure, and services company focused on fundamentally disrupting lunar access economics. In 2024, Intuitive Machines successfully soft-landed the Company's Nova-C class lunar lander, on the Moon, returning the United States to the lunar surface for the first time since 1972. In 2025, Intuitive Machines returned to the lunar south pole with a second lander. The Company's products and services are focused through three pillars of space commercialization: Delivery Services, Data Transmission Services, and Infrastructure as a Service.

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 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: our expectations, results and plans relating to the execution and completion of the AFRL Program. 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: any delayed launches, launch failures, failure of our satellites or lunar landers to reach their planned orbital locations, risks associated with commercial spaceflight, including any accident on launch or during the journey into space; risks associated with the handling, production and disposition of potentially explosive and ignitable energetic materials and other dangerous chemicals in our operations; failure of our products to operate in the expected manner or defects in our sub-systems; failure to comply with various laws and regulations relating to various aspects of our business; and other public filings and press releases other factors detailed under 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 our Current Reports on Form 8-K, and in our subsequent filings with the SEC, which are accessible on the SEC's website at www.sec.gov.

These forward-looking statements are based on information available as of the date of this press release and current expectations, forecasts, and assumptions, and involve a number of judgments, risks, and uncertainties. Accordingly, forward-looking statements should not be relied upon as representing our views as of any subsequent date, and we do not undertake any obligation to update forward-looking statements to reflect events or circumstances after the date they were made, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise, except as may be required under applicable securities laws.

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