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Jones Edmunds secures \$20M contract renewal from NASA

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NASA has re-upped its contract with Gainesville-based civil engineering firm Jones Edmunds for work primarily on the space agency's Space Launch System manned deep-space program.

One key solution Jones Edmunds is developing is making sure Kennedy Space Center's 4-mile gravel roadway from the rocket assembly building to the launch pad can support the SLS vehicle when it is being carried by the "crawler" transporter.

"When you see the rocket going up, there's nothing that we're working on that's on that rocket, but we helped their facilities folks and the infrastructure that supported that launch," said Steve Laux, the firm's vice president and NASA contract manager.

Under the retired Space Shuttle program, the crawler transporter weighed 18 million pounds while carrying a shuttle, but with the much larger SLS vehicle will weigh up to 25 million pounds, Laux said.

To prepare for SLS, Jones Edmunds is using test loads to compact the soil for the expected weight and analyzing the friction created as the crawler moves across the gravel, among other tasks.

The new contract is for five years or up to \$20 million, whichever comes first. While much of the work will revolve around SLS, Laux said Jones Edmunds' civil-engineering services will spread to Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Vandenberg Air Force Base and other NASA facilities around the world.

It's the fourth consecutive five-year contract Jones Edmunds has been awarded from NASA. Prior to the long-term contracts, the firm completed individual projects, starting with closing down and cleaning up two of the space agency's landfills in 1991.

Laux said his firm keeps the contracts by treating NASA like a brand new client and making sure the work is energetic and cost-effective.

NASA representatives couldn't immediately be reached for comment. The agency, which has a total budget of roughly \$18 billion, hopes to conduct SLS's first launch by 2018.

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