



National Aeronautics Space Administration

An Astra experimental rocket leaves the launch pad at Kodiak Island's Pacific Spaceport Complex in Alaska last Friday evening.

Astra Celebrates Success

Ekene Ikeme

Alameda-based Astra Space Inc. completed its first commercial orbital rocket launch Friday, Nov. 19, at its Pacific Spaceport Complex in Kodiak, Alaska.

Astra's launch system successfully demonstrated the orbital placement of a test payload to an inclination of 86 degrees at an altitude of 497 km or 310 miles, according to Astra Director of Product Management Carolina Grossman. The rocket had a velocity of 7.61 kilometers per second in 8 minutes and 47 seconds. The lower part of the rocket landed in the ocean, while the upper stage dissolved into the Earth's atmosphere.

"Reaching orbit is a historic milestone for Astra," said Astra Chairman and CEO Chris Kemp. "We can now focus on delivering for our customers and scaling up rocket production and launch cadence."

Astra's goal is to design a rocket that could be mass produced like an automobile. This launch was contracted by the U.S. Space Force through a Defense Innovation Unit Other Transaction Agreement. The mission was called STP-27AD2. It

was a test flight with the purpose of learning how to design and build rockets that can be launched into space on a regular basis, according to Grossman. A test payload means the rocket carried weight of a normal payload, but no objects were deployed into orbit.

"In the future the payload will be satellites that will help improve life on Earth like monitoring the warming of oceans and deforestations," said Grossman.

The rocket that launched is called the Astra Rocket 3. The launch vehicle is called LV007. The Astra Rocket 3 is 11.6 meters long with a diameter of 1.32 meters. It is designed to carry 100 kilograms in Lower Earth Orbit.

Grossman said that Astra builds smaller rockets because they are easier to produce and transport. The rocket was built in just a few months and assembled at Astra's Alameda headquarters at 1900 Skyhawk St. The rocket and other launch materials were then transported to Kodiak by trucks and aircraft.

Grossman said Alaska is a great location for launching rockets because it's over the ocean,

which keeps the rocket away from people and they work with the government to keep planes and ships from the rocket's path.

"Also, lots of satellites for Earth imaging and observation want to go to polar orbits, which go over the north and south poles, so they can observe all points of the Earth's surface," said Grossman. "Launching from Kodiak make it easier to get to those orbits."

This is the first successful Astra Rocket 3 launch out of four attempts. Grossman said the last failed attempt in August was the result of fuel and oxidizer leaking and combining, causing some electronic components on the engine to shut down.

"We owe this success to our incredible team and the culture we've built at Astra," said Adam London, Co-Founder and CTO of Astra. "I'm humbled by their courage and commitment to keep building, launching, learning, and iterating until we succeeded."

Astra was founded in 2016. It has launch agreements with the U.S. Space Force and NASA. It plans to launch 300 rockets per year by 2025.

To view the launch, visit <https://bit.ly/3cJhUD2>.



Courtesy photo

Last Saturday night the person behind the wheel of this SUV drove his vehicle into the historical fence at High Street and Santa Clara Avenue.

Here we go again

Yet another vehicle collides with 142-year-old Lincoln Park fence.

Dennis Evanosky

Just after 11 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 20, a driver of an SUV heavily damaged the fence that defines the entrance to Lincoln Park.

This marks the third time in the last two-plus years that a driver inflicted damage on this fence, which a local architect designed 142 years ago.

In 1879 R.R. Thompson built a palatial home in today's Lincoln Park. Alameda Museum Curator George Gunn writes that Thompson hired Alameda architect and builder Charles H. Foster to design the fence. Foster later built the Carnegie Library on Santa Clara Avenue with his son.

He employed a pair of Oakland blacksmiths, Leopold Frauneder and William Morck, to fashion his creation. The pair also worked as locksmiths and bell hangers, Gunn says.

The fence complemented Thompson's residence, pictured below, and survived the fire that destroyed the home. (See picture below and story on page 12.)

The palatial mansion burned in a spectacular fire that started just after 2 p.m. on Aug. 18, 1884.

Alameda historian Woody Minor relates that the property lay vacant until the city stepped in, purchased the land and created Lincoln Park in 1909. Since then, the fence

has welcomed visitors to the park.

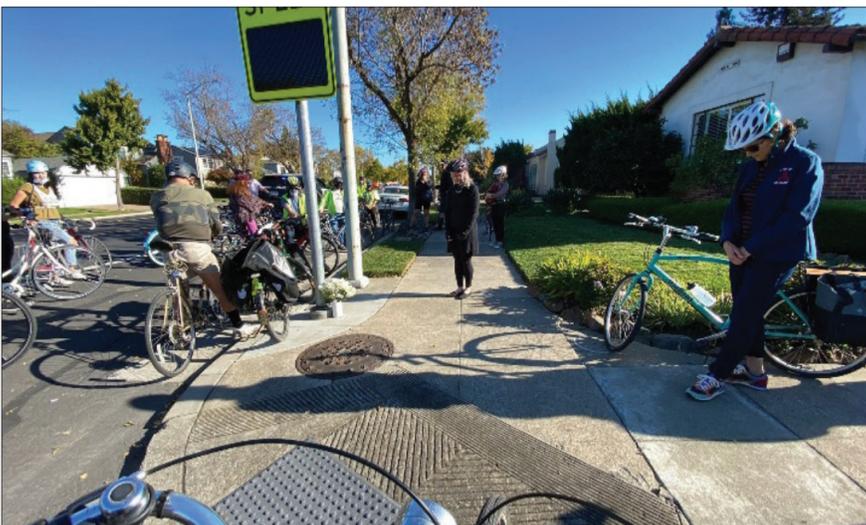
It stood undamaged for 140 years until July 17, 2019, when an alleged drunk driver was attempting to turn from Santa Clara Avenue onto High Street ("Lincoln Park Fence Damaged in Crash, July 30, 2019).

The driver took the turn too widely and crashed into the fence. The driver fled from the vehicle, but witnesses pursued him through the park. They called 911 and Alameda Police Department officers arrived and placed the driver under arrest.

The city contracted Williams Welding to make repairs. The collision damaged not only the fence but the retaining wall and its cast iron covers as well. Pete Calahen repaired the fence on-site because it was so heavy — the damaged portion of the fence weighed some 1,700 pounds.

Earlier this year, on Feb. 22, a pickup truck met up with the fence ("Historic Fence on High Street Takes Another Hit," Feb. 25). The fence was down for a second repair job, and now it's time for a third.

The city has now installed concrete barriers where three drivers have managed to climb the sidewalk in their vehicles and damage the fence. The cause of the latest catastrophe remains under investigation.



Bill Chapin

A Day to Remember Those Killed

Bike Alameda hosted a Safe Streets Rally and Memorial Ride on Sunday to honor the four people killed by drivers in collisions so far this year: Fred Zehnder, Cleofas Guzman, Nickolas Bianchi, and Wilma Chan. In the photograph above they are stopping at Farnside Boulevard and Cambridge Way. A suspected drunk driver ran a stop sign there, then struck and killed Bianchi, who was coming home in September after a day of jet skiing.

County Eases Masking Rules

Pertains to the fully vaccinated in limited indoor settings like gyms and offices.

Sun Staff Reports

In a Nov. 18 press release, the City reminded residents that masks are required in all indoor public places for all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, with limited exceptions.

Alameda County, whose guidelines the City follows announced earlier this month that "masking requirements for fully vaccinated people may be eased if specific measures are taken" in eligible settings. These include offices, gyms, and fitness centers.

The county also relaxed its rules for gatherings in indoor settings where a group gathers on a regular basis, like religious gath-

erings.

The county also stipulates the "participating businesses, organizations, or hosts must verify that all patrons, employees, and attendees are fully vaccinated before allowing them to participate without face coverings inside their facilities." Further, the County reminds these organizations that "no more than 100 persons may be present at these facilities."

Indoor-masking requirements remain in effect in bars, restaurants, retail stores, and other public settings until criteria for lifting these requirements are met. The City's release did not define these criteria.

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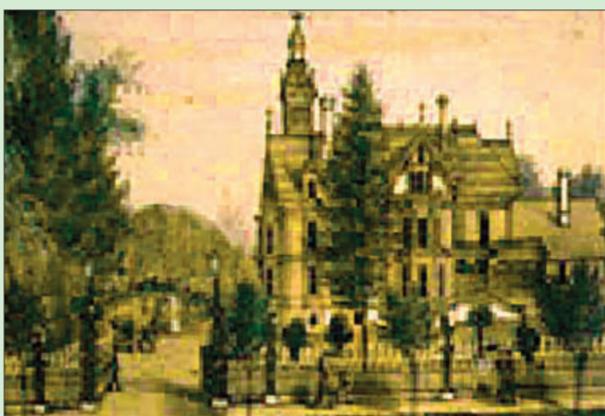
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Date	Rise	Set
Today	6:59	16:52
Nov. 26	7:01	16:52
Nov. 27	7:02	16:52
Nov. 28	7:03	16:51
Nov. 29	7:03	16:51
Nov. 30	7:04	16:51
Dec. 1	7:05	16:51

A close look at this painting reveals the fence that now defines the entrance to Lincoln Park. The home pictured here was once the residence of R. R. Thompson, who supplied the city with its drinking water. Thompson Avenue bears his name. Read more about Thompson and the fate of this palatial mansion on page 12.



Alameda Museum

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