

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



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L:HR:L/2003-260f

Reply to Ann of

The Honorable Todd Staples
The Senate of the State of Texas
State Capitol, Room E1.708
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Senator Staples:

Thank you for your letter of March 27, 2003, to NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe requesting NASA's approval to name a local reservoir project Lake Columbia or Columbia Reservoir to commemorate the seven astronauts lost in the destruction of the Columbia Space Shuttle.

The NASA family would be honored to have the seven brave astronauts remembered in such a manner, particularly by the citizens of East Texas. The search and recovery efforts that continue to be aided by the people of your Legislative District, whose lives were so directly affected by debris that fell from Columbia, are extraordinary. Considering how devastating this tragic accident was, these recovery efforts are vital to ensuring that we do everything possible to understand what happened, fix it and return to flight. Your constituents and the amazing efforts they have put forth will help us reach this goal.

On behalf of Mr. O'Keefe and the rest of NASA, please relay our most heartfelt thanks to the people of Cherokee County for their compassion and thoughtful tribute to the crew of Mission STS-107. We have lost seven courageous members of the NASA family, but it is memorials like this one that will ensure they will never be forgotten.

Cordially,

Charles T. Horner, III
Assistant Administrator
for Legislative Affairs