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News Release

GRADUATE RESEARCH CENTER OF THE SOUTHWEST

SOUTHWEST CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

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RELEASE

GRCSW COSMIC-RAY DETECTOR PACKAGE TO CIRCLE SUN IN PIONEER FLIGHT FROM  
CAPE KENNEDY

--Dallas

A cosmic-ray detector unit prepared by the Graduate Research Center of the Southwest should be circling the sun in a flight from Cape Kennedy sometime before Christmas. Pioneer Cosmic-Ray Experiment Flight Unit No. 1 has been delivered to NASA at Cape Kennedy, Fla. The package weighs less than five pounds and contains a cosmic-ray detector, signal conditioner, and power unit.

Both the detector and the ground-support equipment have been built to Center designs with the help of industrial subcontractors. In the Dallas area, Texas Instruments Incorporated has provided components and testing facilities.

The Center's basic contract is with NASA-Ames Research and calls for two flight units and two sets of ground support equipment for pre-launch testing.

Prof. Kenneth G. McCracken of the Space Sciences Division at GRCSW is principal investigator on the Center's experiment team. Research Scientist William C. Bartley has directed the instrument design program.

Pioneer is a 140-pound interplanetary scientific vehicle, carrying magnetometers, plasma probe, radio propagation experiments, and micrometeoroid detectors. In two flights, Pioneers will circle the Sun at distances slightly less and slightly more than the Earth's orbit.