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NASA Announces New Centennial Challenge

NASA, in collaboration with the Florida Space Research Institute (FSRI), today announced a new Centennial Challenges prize competition.

The MoonROx (Moon Regolith Oxygen) challenge will award \$250,000 to the first team that can extract breathable oxygen from simulated lunar soil before the prize expires on June 1, 2008.

For the MoonROx challenge, teams must develop hardware within mass and power limits that can extract at least five kilograms of breathable oxygen from simulated lunar soil during an eight-hour period. The soil simulant, called JSC-1, is derived from volcanic ash. The oxygen production goals represent technologies that are beyond existing state-of-the-art.

NASA's Centennial Challenges promotes technical innovation through a novel program of prize competitions. It is designed to tap the nation's ingenuity to make revolutionary advances to support the Vision for Space Exploration and NASA goals.

"The use of resources on other worlds is a key element of the Vision for Space Exploration," said NASA's Associate Administrator for the Exploration Systems Mission Directorate, Craig Steidle. "This challenge will reach out to inventors who can help us achieve the Vision sooner," he added.

"This is our third prize competition, and the Centennial Challenges program is getting more and more exciting with each new announcement. The innovations from this competition will help support long-duration, human and robotic exploration of the moon and other worlds," said Brant Sponberg, NASA's Centennial Challenges program manager.

"Oxygen extraction technologies will be critical for both robotic and human missions to the moon," said FSRI Executive Director Sam Durrance. "Like other space-focused prize competitions, the MoonROx challenge will encourage a broad community of innovators to develop technologies that expand our capabilities," he added.

The Centennial Challenges program is managed by NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate. FSRI is a state-wide center for space research. It was established by Florida's governor and legislature in 1999.

For more information about Centennial Challenges on the Internet, visit:

<http://centennialchallenges.nasa.gov>

For more information about NASA and agency programs on the Internet, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/home/index.html>

For information about the Florida Space Research Institute on the Internet, visit:

<http://www.fsri.org>

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