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NASA NEWS

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NASA's Centennial Challenges Collaborates With Foundation

NASA announced its intent to collaborate with the X PRIZE Foundation on two planned Centennial Challenges prize competitions.

Implementation of the collaboration is contingent upon NASA obtaining necessary statutory authority for prizes; inclusion of necessary resources in the Centennial Challenges budget to fund the purses; final negotiation and execution of an agreement between the agency and the Foundation.

The prize competitions from the collaboration will be related to suborbital launch vehicle technology development. The prizes are envisioned to be greater than \$250,000 each. The Foundation will administer and execute the competitions at no cost to NASA, with the agency providing prize funding to the winning contestants.

NASA and the Foundation are working toward signing a non-reimbursable Space Act Agreement to formalize collaboration on the two competitions. The competitions were tentatively named the Suborbital Payload Challenge and the Suborbital Lunar Lander Analog Challenge.

"We look forward to working with the X PRIZE Foundation over the coming months to define the rules for these competitions," said NASA Centennial Challenges Manager Brant Sponberg. "These prizes are intended to accelerate the development of the suborbital launch industry while also demonstrating technologies and capabilities relevant to other NASA activities."

The Suborbital Payload Challenge will reward the first team that demonstrates a reusable suborbital rocket to altitudes or speeds of interest to science researchers. Once demonstrated, such a capability could support NASA and other research payloads.

The Suborbital Lunar Lander Analog Challenge will reward the first team to build a vertical take-off/vertical landing suborbital vehicle capable of reaching a speed consistent with the energies required to land and launch from the moon. This prize is intended to stimulate development of technologies and capabilities for lunar and suborbital space flight.

"We look forward to the possibility of offering these cash purses at the annual X PRIZE Cup in New Mexico," said Dr. Peter H. Diamandis, Chairman of the X PRIZE Foundation. "NASA's cash purses will complement other prizes we intend to assemble from corporate sponsorships around the world."

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. NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate manages the program.

The X PRIZE Foundation is a not-for-profit educational organization using competitions to create innovative breakthroughs in space and related technologies for the benefit of mankind. The Foundation captured world headlines when Mojave Aerospace built and flew the world's first private spacecraft to the edge of space to win the \$10 million ANSARI X PRIZE.

For information about Centennial Challenges on the Web, visit:

<http://centennialchallenges.nasa.gov>

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

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

For information about the X PRIZE Foundation on the Web, visit:

<http://www.xprize.org>

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