



SEPTEMBER 17, 2004

The Vision for Space Exploration

An Update from the Coalition for Space Exploration

Gallup Poll Shows Americans Support the Vision for Space Exploration

NASA and the U.S. space program enjoy broad support and interest from the American public, including strong support for maintaining or increasing NASA's budget, according to the results of a new Gallup survey sponsored by the Coalition for Space Exploration.



More than two-thirds (68%) of the American public say they support a new plan for space exploration that would include a stepping-stone approach to return the Space Shuttle to flight, complete assembly of the International Space Station, build a new crew exploration vehicle, go back to the Moon and then on to Mars and beyond.

With funding for such a program expected not to exceed 1 percent of the federal budget, 42% of adults surveyed say they support the program and 26% strongly support it. That support is also strongly bipartisan – a majority of Republicans (79%) and Democrats (60%) support such an exploration plan. Finally, when it comes to the size of NASA's budget, almost two-thirds (63%) of American adults surveyed think NASA's budget should remain at present (37%) or increased (26%) levels. Full results of the poll can be found at <http://www.spacecoalition.com/>.

State Leaders Express Strong Support for the Vision

Governors and State Legislatures across the country have expressed their support for the Vision for Space Exploration. Proclamations or resolutions have been passed in Alabama, California, Mississippi, Texas, Arizona, Kansas, Ohio, and Louisiana in which the state leaders emphasize the vital role space exploration plays in maintaining high technology leadership in their states as well as the nation.

Additionally, this July the Coalition for Space Exploration visited the annual American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) Conference in Seattle, Washington. ALEC attracted over 3,000 state legislators, staff, and officials from across the nation, and they all had an opportunity to visit the Coalition exhibit to discuss the impact of space exploration in their communities. U.S. Representative John Culberson visited the Coalition exhibit to convey his strong support for the Vision.

NASA Selects Companies for Preliminary Exploration Studies

Using \$75 million in FY2004 funds reallocated with Congressional approval, NASA issued the first eleven contracts to conduct preliminary concept studies for human lunar exploration and the development of the crew exploration vehicle. NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate Associate Administrator Craig Steidle said, "These study contracts reflect NASA's new commitment to find the best outside expertise that will work in partnerships to benefit the nation's goals for space exploration." The contracts, which total approximately \$27 million, with a possible option worth an additional \$27 million, are a result of the Concept Exploration and Refinement Broad Agency Announcement issued in May 2004. The contracts and resulting findings will assist NASA as it works to provide more detailed long-term plans for the Vision to Capitol Hill. More information is available online at <http://exploration.nasa.gov/>.



Coalition for Space Exploration Visits Span the Nation

From Alaska to New York, Coalition team members have been visiting communities across the nation to discuss the exciting new Vision for Space Exploration and how they can play a role. Visits began in May with former astronauts sharing the excitement of spaceflight in Wichita, Kansas; St. Louis, Missouri; and Kenai, Alaska. Coalition teams also exhibited at the LEGOLAND exhibit at Disneyland in California, where they were joined by former NASA astronaut Sally Ride, the first U.S. woman in space, as well as former astronaut Charlie Bolden; together they reached more than 15,000 park visitors.



TOP: The Coalition team with former NASA Astronaut Charlie Bolden at the LEGOLAND exhibit in California.

Also this summer, former astronaut and United Space Alliance President & CEO Mike McCulley and members of the Coalition team visited Utica, New York, where they joined House Science Committee Chairman Sherwood Boehlert at the Children's Museum of New York. Other Coalition visits and community events in recent weeks have been sponsored in Dayton, Ohio; New Orleans, Louisiana; St. Louis, Missouri; Chicopee, Massachusetts; Baltimore, Maryland; Denver, Colorado; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Phoenix, Arizona.



RIGHT: House Science Committee Chairman Sherwood Boehlert with Marlene Brown, Executive Director of the Children's Museum in Utica, New York.

Space Shuttle Facilities Recovering from Hurricane Frances, Assessing Impact of Ivan

Kennedy Space Center in Florida, home to the Space Shuttle fleet, is recovering after damage from Hurricane Frances. While the three Space Shuttle orbiters (Discovery, Atlantis and Endeavour), the Shuttle launch pads and critical flight hardware for the orbiters and the International Space Station were not damaged by the storm, several support facilities suffered varying degrees of damage. The Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB), the Thermal Protection System Facility (TPSF) and the Processing Control Center (PCC) received significant damage. The Operations and Checkout Building, Vertical Processing Facility, Hangar AE, Hangar S, and Hangar AF Small Parts Facility received substantial damage.

\$126 million to repair these facilities and equipment were included in an emergency FY 2004 supplemental appropriations request submitted earlier this week (September 14), which U.S. House Appropriations Chairman Bill Young promised to move "quickly and cleanly through the Congress," saying the "the sooner we get it on the President's desk, the sooner the aid can flow to our ailing communities." Two more facilities that provide extensive support to the Space Shuttle program – NASA's Stennis Space Center in Mississippi and the Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans, Louisiana – will be assessing damage from this week's landfall of Hurricane Ivan.

NASA's Mars Rovers – Still Going Strong after 7 Months on the Job

The "advance team" for future human exploration of Mars continues hard at work, delighting mission manager and scientists with their durability. The Mars rover Opportunity and its twin, Spirit, have each conducted more than four months of bonus exploration and discoveries after successfully completing their three-month primary missions on Mars. The Vision for Space Exploration calls for cooperative efforts conducted by both robotic and human explorers to explore our solar system. More information on the Mars mission and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory's other planetary exploration efforts is available online at <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/>.



News Coverage

Washington Times Op-Ed: "A Vision for the Ages" by U.S. Chamber President & CEO Thomas Donahue

September 8, 2004 – "...Congress should seize the opportunity to make an investment in our economic and technological future. NASA's fiscal year 2005 budget will be the first spending plan to have a direct impact on the Vision for Space Exploration. It is essential that Congress provide NASA its full funding request so that the President's vision can become reality. If Congress wants a surefire way to maintain America's lead in the global economy, create great new jobs and inspire a generation, it should simply look to the stars."

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/op-ed/20040908-085555-2126r.htm>

