

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CALIFORNIA CONTINUES TO MAKE SPACE ENTERPRISE HISTORY**

MOJAVE – In the early morning, on a quiet and empty airstrip in the vast and expansive Mojave Desert plain, 300 scientists, engineers, technicians and space enthusiasts gathered for another of many California Firsts. WhiteKnightTwo, the twin-fuselaged mother plane of the futuristic SpaceShipTwo, sits patiently in the morning sun waiting its unveiling. The crowd is excited by the thriving potential represented in this new launch platform. Designer Burt Rutan and Sir Richard Branson, along with his Virgin Galactic team, are on hand for this exciting event.

“Today we see the tangible evidence of a dream coming true,” noted Andrea Seastrand, Executive Director of the California Space Authority. “It’s even more exciting to be able to say that this vehicle and the fleet to follow are being built by California hands.”

Scaled Composites is a California-based company located in Mojave at America’s first inland spaceport. Much of the celebration was focused on the dedicated and energetic workforce who built WhiteKnightTwo and who are currently building SpaceShipTwo.

“It was exciting to meet and speak with the actual men and women, many of whom were educated in California, who built this amazing vehicle,” continued Seastrand. “Our state has one of the most educated workforces in the world and the scientists, engineers and technicians who were introduced as part of the ceremony are on the cutting edge of aviation and space technology. These Californian’s are changing the future of aviation and space travel.”

Enthusiasts look forward to the day when spaceports can be found worldwide. Methods of travel, weightless research and increased services from space technologies will ultimately drive access costs down and, in turn, stimulate further expansion.

“As spaceports begin to spring up around the globe, I am pleased to know that it will be innovators from California who will dominate the design and manufacturing of the vehicles that will populate these facilities,” Seastrand stated.

*California Space Authority is a nonprofit organization supporting California’s commercial, civil and national security space stakeholders. Governed by a statewide board of directors, CSA works closely with the State of California, industry, other government, education, workforce entities and academia to support space enterprise development and expansion statewide.*

The rollout signals the beginning of an ambitious program that space tourism advocates expect will culminate with the first suborbital journeys by the end of the decade. More than 270 amateur astronauts have reserved a \$200,000 seat for a chance to float weightless for a mere five minutes some 62 miles above the Earth. The WhiteKnightTwo will make this happen by carrying SpaceShipTwo 50,000 feet into the sky before it is released to rocket upwards.

“California continues to prove it is on the cutting edge of space technology,” concluded Seastrand.

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