COMMERCIAL SPACEFLIGHT FEDERATION

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Next-Generation Suborbital Researchers Conference in February to Focus on Research and Education Uses of Commercial Suborbital Spacecraft

Washington, DC – September 18, 2009 – The Commercial Spaceflight Federation is pleased to announce its co-sponsorship of the Next-Generation Suborbital Researchers Conference (NSRC), which is being organized in conjunction with the Southwest Research Institute (SwRI) and the Universities Space Research Association (USRA).

This conference, to be held in Boulder, Colorado during February 18-20, 2010, will allow scientists, engineers, and educators to learn about the research and education capabilities of commercial suborbital spacecraft and to foster a two-way conversation between the research community and the commercial spaceflight industry.

The Next-Generation Suborbital Researchers Conference (NSRC) will include a strong leadership role by researchers and educators from the Suborbital Applications Researchers Group (SARG), a scientific advisory committee that was recently formed under the aegis of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation.

"NSRC represents the first broadly based meeting to highlight the benefits of the coming era of routine suborbital space travel for research and education," said NSRC organizer and SARG chair Dr. S. Alan Stern of the Southwest Research Institute, who previously served as head of the Science Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters. "The dramatically lower cost and dramatically higher flight rates of the human-rated and robotic suborbital vehicles now emerging from design to factory floor and flight will transform spaceflight from the rare to the routine. The additional fact that space researchers and educators will be able to fly with the gear in the same way that oceanographers descend to depth in submersibles and geophysicists ascend mountaintops and explore Antarctica, makes the coming suborbital era even more exciting. NSRC is an opportunity for researchers and educators across engineering and the spectrum of space and Earth science fields to exchange ideas and make concrete plans for early research missions, some beginning as soon as 2011."

"The potential of next-generation suborbital vehicles to contribute to science is very exciting," stated Dr. Frederick A. Tarantino, President of the Universities Space Research Association (USRA) and another NSRC organizer. "Suborbital programs are essential for conducting needed investigations

of the mesosphere, thermosphere and ionosphere. They can also provide extended microgravity durations beyond that achievable with parabolic flights and can offer excellent precursor experiments for science on the International Space Station."

Bretton Alexander, President of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation, added, "I share the enthusiasm displayed by the scientists in our new Suborbital Applications Researchers Group for the great research potential of next-generation suborbital vehicles. The commercial spaceflight sector is excited to work with government, academia, and industry to start putting payloads on next-generation suborbital vehicles."

The Next-Generation Suborbital Researchers Conference will include research tracks dedicated to the various disciplines that will potentially benefit from next-generation suborbital vehicles, such as atmospheric science, solar physics, microgravity science, planetary science, space life science, space physics, and also tracks for education and public outreach (EPO)—a major applications area for next-gen suborbital missions.

The abstract deadline for the conference will be November 12, 2009. To subscribe to a mailing list to receive e-mail updates about the conference, please submit the Indication of Intent Form found at http://www.lpi.usra.edu/meetings/nsrc2010/iofi/ by October 14, 2009. For additional information on the meeting, visit http://www.lpi.usra.edu/meetings/nsrc2010/.

About the Commercial Spaceflight Federation

The mission of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation (CSF) is to promote the development of commercial human spaceflight, pursue ever higher levels of safety, and share best practices and expertise throughout the industry. Commercial Spaceflight Federation member organizations include commercial spaceflight developers, operators, and spaceports. The Commercial Spaceflight Federation is governed by a board of directors, composed of the member companies' CEO-level officers and entrepreneurs. For more information please contact Executive Director John Gedmark at 202.349.1121 or visit www.commercialspaceflight.org.

About the Suborbital Applications Researchers Group

The Suborbital Applications Researchers Group (SARG) is a coordination and advisory committee of the Commercial Spaceflight Federation, composed of scientists and researchers dedicated to furthering the scientific potential of suborbital reusable launch vehicles under development by the commercial spaceflight sector. SARG seeks to increase awareness of commercial suborbital vehicles in the science, R&D, and education communities, work with policymakers to ensure that payloads can have easy access to these vehicles, and aim to generate new ideas for uses of these vehicles for science, engineering, and education missions. SARG is taking a leadership role in the February 2010 Next-Generation Suborbital Researchers Conference (NSRC). For more information please contact Dr. Alan Stern at astern@boulder.swri.edu or at 303.324.5269.

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