



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Announces X PRIZE CUP Events

New Mexico's X PRIZE CUP event follows last year's second biggest news story - \$10 Million Ansari X PRIZE won by SpaceShipOne

LAS CRUCES, NM (April 13 2005) – As part of a groundbreaking move to make New Mexico the launch pad for commercial space travel, Governor Bill Richardson today announced southern New Mexico will host a special event called ***Countdown to the X PRIZE CUP***, that will include X PRIZE CUP team demonstrations, an exhibition, the largest-ever space education day, and space-related community events statewide. The event will take place this fall, as Governor Richardson declared October 4-9, 2005 will be “X PRIZE CUP” week throughout the state of New Mexico.

“New Mexico continues to take the lead in advancing the next generation of space vehicles and space travelers,” said Governor Richardson. “This year’s ***Countdown to X PRIZE CUP*** is the important first step in creating an event that will not only assist in opening the space frontier to all private citizens, but will bring new companies, provide new jobs, increase tourism statewide, and help brand New Mexico as the place to be to experience the future.”

At a press conference in Las Cruces, the Governor outlined the week’s activities for the ***Countdown to X PRIZE CUP***. Joining the Governor in the announcement was Dr. Peter H. Diamandis, Founder and Chairman of the X PRIZE Foundation, which is partnering with New Mexico in developing the X PRIZE CUP annual even, and New Mexico Secretary of Economic Development Rick Homans.

“The X PRIZE Foundation is thrilled to be partners with the citizens of New Mexico in creating what will become the premiere space event of the 21st Century as we launch the personal spaceflight revolution,” said Dr. Peter H. Diamandis, Chairman and Founder of the X PRIZE Foundation.

Events announced for the *Countdown to the X PRIZE CUP* include:

- Demonstration flights of reusable space vehicles by future X PRIZE CUP contenders at the Las Cruces International Airport
- Preview flights of the Tier-1 X PRIZE Rocket Racer at the Las Cruces International Airport.
- Static hardware displays of the X PRIZE team vehicles, flight simulations and opportunities to visit with astronauts, spacecraft designers, and X PRIZE team leaders and pilots,
- Education Day at the Alamogordo Space History Museum for New Mexico's next generation of engineers, pilots, astronauts, and space entrepreneurs with more than 2000 students participating
- During the event, Zero Gravity Corporation's G-FORCE One will conduct weightless flights utilizing the only FAA approved zero-gravity aircraft

Also taking place at the *Countdown to the X PRIZE CUP* will be the announcement of future X PRIZE CUP competitions, a preview of X PRIZE CUP 2006, and community events celebrating space throughout the state. Community meetings are being scheduled across the state to help communities create their own space-related events for X PRIZE CUP Week, to listen to ideas and answer any questions.

The X PRIZE CUP is an official partnership between the state of New Mexico and the X PRIZE Foundation, an educational 501(c)3 organization. New Mexico officially won the right to host the X PRIZE CUP in a national competition conducted by the X PRIZE Foundation in 2004, winning over Florida, California and Oklahoma.

Last year, the state has allocated \$9 million to develop the infrastructure, launch and landing facilities necessary to host and market the competition and related events throughout the state, and to prepare the Southwest Regional Spaceport in Upham, near Las Cruces, to become the country's first licensed inland spaceport. This year, the legislature created the New Mexico Spaceport Authority to build and operate the Southwest Regional Spaceport and Governor Richardson committed \$1 million dollars in capital outlay funds to support it.

White Sands Missile Range will be the interim spaceport until the Southwest Regional Spaceport is opened in 2007 or 2008. They plan on hosting the 2006 Inaugural X PRIZE CUP, pending proper licensing of the competition vehicles.

"The *Countdown to the X PRIZE CUP* begins a new era for New Mexico," said Rick Homans, New Mexico Economic Development Department Secretary. "It puts us on the ground floor of the whole new commercial space travel industry."

The X PRIZE was the second biggest story of 2004, when SpaceShipOne, built by Burt Rutan of Scaled Composites and sponsored by New Mexico resident Paul Allen, won the \$10 million ANSARI X PRIZE. Scaled Composites built and flew the first private spacecraft to an altitude of 62 miles to the edge of space, making suborbital pilots Mike Melvil and Brian Binnie the first private astronauts.

“The annual X PRIZE CUP has the potential to be an event of global importance, bringing visitors and visibility for New Mexico from around the world and beyond” said Michael Cerletti, New Mexico Tourism Department Secretary. “The planet will be watching as we reach for the stars.”

The mission of the X PRIZE Foundation is to create radical breakthroughs in space and other technologies for the benefit of humanity. In the spirit of CHAMP CAR and the America’s CUP, New Mexico’s X PRIZE CUP will provide the arena for X PRIZE-class vehicles to compete in the future for cash prizes in annual races at the Southwest Regional Spaceport.

Specific and updated information regarding the activities scheduled for X PRIZE CUP 2005 can be found on the X PRIZE Foundation website: www.xprize.org/xprizecup2005.

For further information, contact Rorie Hanrahan, Communications Director, Economic Development Department, State of New Mexico (rorie.hanrahan@edd.state.nm.us) or Ian Murphy of the X PRIZE Foundation (press@xprize.org).

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