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Lompoc Vies to Host X PRIZE CUP

The City of Lompoc, in partnership with Vandenberg Air Force Base, is the sole contender from California in the bid to host the X PRIZE CUP. The X PRIZE CUP will be the first air show for the private space community, featuring X PRIZE-Class manned spacecraft competitions and a public space flight exhibition. The X PRIZE is a \$10 million award to the first privately funded team who builds and launches a manned spacecraft capable of carrying three people to space (an altitude of 100 km) on two flights within two weeks.

Lompoc is the ideal location to host the event because of the rich history and mission at Vandenberg and the diverse space-related activities and artifacts in the area. Vandenberg AFB is the nation's premier polar launch site, with 18,000 launches and zero casualties over 40 years. Vandenberg's vast undeveloped area for space test flight, as well as the safety record and policy of the installation, contribute to the excellent launch record. "Public safety is a high concern and compliance with all federal safety and environmental regulations at the X PRIZE CUP will be paramount," emphasized VAFB 30th Space Wing Chief of Plans and Programs Paul Klock.

Lompoc and surrounding communities offer critical support infrastructure, such as airports, hotels, and exhibit halls. Santa Barbara County wine country, Spanish missions, pristine beaches and other tourism attractions enhance Lompoc's bid. Hosting the annual X PRIZE CUP will stimulate tourism, investment, and job growth in Lompoc and boost California's lagging space enterprise business. Lompoc Mayor Dick DeWees stated, "Twice Lompoc has geared up for manned space launches at Vandenberg with the Manned Orbiting Lab and the Space Shuttle. We believe three's a charm and we are eager to gear up to be the home of the X PRIZE CUP!"

Five of the twenty-four registered X PRIZE teams are already from California, including Solvang-based Pioneer Rocketplane, American Astronautics Corporation, Interorbital Systems (IOS), Kelly Space & Technology, and Scaled Composites. A Mojave Desert airport has received FAA approval for use as a staging site for sub-orbital missions and two rocket teams' applications have also been approved. Scaled Composites, led by aviation maverick Burt Rutan, and Armadillo Aerospace, a Dallas group headed by John Carmack, the computer game designer of Doom and Quake, both plan to launch from Mojave in December 2003.

The X PRIZE Foundation is preparing to select a strategic partner and hosting venue for the annual X PRIZE CUP. The two-week long event will take place at the same time

and same location each year and will allow all X PRIZE-Class vehicles to compete for cash prizes in a series of races resulting in a single winner. While only one team will win the \$10 Million X PRIZE, many teams are expected to create reusable launch vehicles in the private sector.

The main objective of the X PRIZE CUP is to motivate X PRIZE teams to continue to innovate, diversify, and improve their vehicles for space tourism. "Expanding the capabilities of these vehicles is paramount to the viability and economic prosperity of private spaceflight," said X PRIZE Chairman Peter H. Diamandis. "Just as the National Air Races were called 'The Laboratory of the Air,' the X PRIZE CUP will serve as the driving force for public spaceflight development."

"For those teams that are building hardware, but don't win the \$10M purse, this is a chance for them to continue their efforts. The X PRIZE CUP is modeled after NASCAR, America's Cup and the Olympics and should assist teams in attracting continued funding and sponsorships," said Diamandis.

The deadline for the X PRIZE CUP proposal is December 15, 2003, and the X PRIZE Foundation will choose a partner to host the X PRIZE CUP by March 15, 2004. Florida Space Authority, New Mexico Office for Space Commercialization, and Oklahoma Space Industry Development Authority are the other contenders.

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