



### **News release**

Contact: Kathryn Cooper  
Communications Manager  
2525 Bay Area Blvd., Suite 640  
Houston, Texas 77058  
Phone: 281.486.5535  
Fax: 281.486.5068  
Email: [kathryn@bayareahouston.com](mailto:kathryn@bayareahouston.com)  
Visit: [www.bayareahouston.com](http://www.bayareahouston.com)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Lampson celebrates NASA at Town Hall Meeting**

**BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS** – NASA’s Johnson Space Center lies not only deep in the heart of Texas but also deep in the state’s 22<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District. Congressman Nick Lampson, D-Texas, represents this district in the U.S. House of Representatives. The congressman held a Town Hall Meeting on Monday, July 21, at the University of Houston – Clear Lake to celebrate NASA’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The meeting featured a panel discussion, which focused on NASA’s numerous accomplishments and looked forward to its next 50 years.

The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, in conjunction with NASA-JSC, sponsored the meeting. Bob Mitchell, president of the partnership, commented, “Congressman Lampson is a huge proponent of NASA. Increased funding for its programs, as well as for BAHEP’s Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program, is a direct result of his leadership and tireless effort on behalf of all of us in his district.”

The meeting began with opening remarks and an introduction of Congressman Lampson by Dr. William Staples, UH-CL president. Other members of the panel included Commissioner Sylvia Garcia, Harris County Precinct 2; Wayne Hale, NASA deputy associate administrator for Strategic Partnerships; and Sandy Johnson, president, Barrios Technology. U. S. Senator Bill Nelson, D-Fla., chairman of the Senate’s Commerce Subcommittee on Technology and Space, joined the participants by way of a recorded message.

The congressman’s opening remarks included a brief history of NASA’s beginnings, which date back to July 29, 1958. He then addressed an issue of utmost concern to the local community – the prospective loss of jobs due to the five-year gap between the conclusion of the Space Shuttle program in 2010 and NASA’s new Constellation Program that launches in 2015. Lampson noted that he had been in meetings recently with NASA Administrator Mike Griffin saying, “He made some very clear statements to me. One is that there may be some skill set changes, but there are not going to be any job losses here at the Johnson Space Center through this transition into the Constellation Program.” The congressman also relayed a message from Griffin who wanted him to tell the people at NASA-JSC, “I respect them immensely. I am exceptionally proud of them. I love them and the work that they are doing.”

He reported on the passage of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008, H.R. 6063, which passed the House 409 - 15 providing NASA with \$20.2 billion in FY2009 – a \$2.6 billion increase from FY2008. The Act includes \$19.2 billion for NASA programs in science, aeronautics, exploration, and education while the additional \$1 billion will accelerate the development of the Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle and Ares I Crew Launch Vehicle that will replace the Space Shuttle.

Following remarks by the panelists, the floor was opened to questions from the audience. Topics included the possibility of space-based solar power. Hale commented, “We must be prepared to generate power in ways that don’t involve fossil fuels.” He mentioned wind power and the eventuality of mining Helium 3 on the surface of the moon. Johnson stressed the importance of long-term funding for NASA that would, in turn, generate investments from the private sector.

In closing, several members of the audience stated that information on NASA’s achievements and their far reaching benefits needs to be widely distributed outside of the NASA community. Earlier in the discussion, Garcia had supported this effort saying, “We need to do a better job of reminding everyone of what a good job NASA does.” She also commented, “We need to make sure that NASA is fully funded, that NASA is fully staffed, and that NASA has the resources to go on for the next 50 years.”

For more information on how NASA affects your daily life, visit [www.nasa.gov/externalflash/nasacity/landing.htm](http://www.nasa.gov/externalflash/nasacity/landing.htm).

Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership is a member-driven organization that provides the leadership to stimulate regional economic development and employment in southeast Texas. Its members include over 270 business partners encompassing 13 cities and Galveston and Harris counties. Visit [www.bayareahouston.com](http://www.bayareahouston.com) to learn more.

-30-



Congressman Nick Lampson, D-Texas, makes his opening remarks during a Town Hall Meeting held July 21, 2008, at the University of Houston – Clear Lake in celebration of NASA’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.



Nick Lampson, D-Texas, center, responds to a question from the audience during his Town Hall Meeting on July 21, 2008. Others seated with him are (l to r): Dr. William Staples, president, University of Houston – Clear Lake; Commissioner Sylvia Garcia, Harris County Precinct 2; Wayne Hale, NASA deputy associate administrator for Strategic Partnerships; and Sandy Johnson, president, Barrios Technology.