



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
Visit: www.bayareahouston.com

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*Mike Coats, director
NASA Johnson Space Center
U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison*

Senators Hutchison and Cornyn commend Coats as 2009 recipient of BAHEP's Quasar Award

by Pat Patton

BAY AREA HOUSTON, Texas -- U. S. Sens. Kay Bailey Hutchison and John Cornyn have commended Mike Coats, director of NASA Johnson Space Center, for being honored with Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership's prestigious 2009 Quasar Award for Economic Development Excellence. Coats

will be presented the award during the organization's Annual Quasar Award Banquet on Friday, Jan. 16, 2009, at the South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center in League City.

The Quasar Award is presented annually to an outstanding individual who has contributed greatly to the economic wealth and diversity of the Bay Area Houston region. The Quasar Award will be presented to Coats in appreciation and acknowledgment of his many accomplishments as director of NASA Johnson Space Center over the last three years. Under his unwavering leadership, for the first time in the center's history, JSC is home to three major programs: Shuttle, Space Station, and Constellation. Specifically, Director Coats' leadership and actions as NASA Johnson Space Center transitions from shuttle to Constellation ensures jobs will continue to be recruited, expanded, retained, and created in the fields of science and technology.

Hutchison said, "Mike Coats has been a tremendous leader at NASA, the Johnson Space Center, and in the Houston area. During his tenure as director, Mike has overseen one of NASA's most important strategic transitions since its establishment 50 years ago. With the transition to three major programs at the Johnson Space Center came greater stability and economic growth in the area, and the future of space exploration continues to be bright because of his remarkable leadership. The Quasar Award is a fitting recognition for his outstanding work, and I look forward to continuing to work with Mike in the coming years."

Coats said, "I am delighted to accept this award on behalf of the dedicated men and women of NASA and the Johnson Space Center. This is a wonderful honor that represents a great partnership between JSC and the community. I am particularly pleased to receive it during NASA's 50th year of contributions to our nation."

Some of Coats' career highlights include being a U.S. Naval test pilot, a NASA astronaut, and being chosen to be the 10th director of the NASA Johnson Space Center in November 2005. He was elected as a Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) in 2008, inducted into the Astronaut Hall of Fame in 2007, and awarded the FAI Gold Space Medal in 2006. Coats is the recipient of the Defense Superior Service Medal, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, 32 Strike Flight Air Medals, three Individual Action Air Medals, nine Navy Commendation Medals with Combat V, three NASA Space Flight Medals, the NASA Distinguished Service Medal, and the NASA Medal For Outstanding Leadership.

Cornyn said, "Under the leadership of Mike Coats, the partnership between the Johnson Space Center and the businesses and cities surrounding it has never been stronger. He has helped usher in an unmatched era of cooperation that has benefited both NASA and the entire region. I join the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership in applauding the excellent work of Mr. Coats in his position as director of the Johnson Space Center. The Quasar Award is a much deserved tribute to his dedication. As NASA continues to expand its work in the area, I know that Mike Coats will be a strong voice for growing opportunities in the community, and I thank him for his service."

Bob Mitchell, president of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership said, "Mike Coats has been a naval aviator and flight instructor, a veteran astronaut and an aerospace executive, as well as a husband, father and grandfather. He has excelled in these many and varied roles, which eventually culminated in his selection as the 10th director of the Johnson Space Center in November 2005. Over the past three years, Director Coats has demonstrated this same kind of excellence in his leadership role at JSC, and he has earned the respect of JSC employees and contractors alike. His untiring dedication to the expansion of our nation's space program, and consequently the positive effect this will have on the region, has also garnered the respect of the community. Director Coats' lifetime of achievement and successful tenure at the Johnson Space Center make him the ideal recipient of this year's Quasar Award."

The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership provides the leadership necessary to stimulate economic development and employment throughout the region. For more information on the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, please call 281.486.5535 or visit www.bayareahouston.com.

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