



News release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Space Matters to Texas!

BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS – The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership and the NASA Johnson Space Center worked together to launch Space Week Texas 2009, which was held March 4-12. The message they delivered to Texas legislators was *Space Matters to Texas!* Topics of discussion included the importance of the Texas Aerospace Scholars Program (TAS) and Technology Outreach Program (TOP) to the people of Texas, NASA’s contributions to our daily lives, and JSC’s economic impact on the state.

A major component of the Texas Aerospace Scholars Program provides high school students an interactive on-line learning experience highlighted by a week-long internship where selected students are encouraged to study math, science, engineering, or computer science by interacting with engineers at NASA JSC. The Technology Outreach Program is a free service designed to provide technical assistance and speed the transfer of space technology to the private sector. By giving free technology assistance to small businesses, TOP helps them solve their challenges and increases their chances of succeeding.

Bob Mitchell, BAHEP president, stated, “The legislators from the Houston region know very well the importance of NASA JSC in our lives and to our economy. However, every Texas senator and representative needs to be fully informed of NASA’s impact on our state and the great results of the TAS and TOP state-funded programs. We will continue to collaborate with NASA JSC in support of these initiatives.”

Meetings with state legislators took place on March 4 and 5 where 19 teams comprised of 78 travelers from the Bay Area Houston region made over 170 office visits. The teams included 10 students who were former TAS participants.

Various activities highlight Space Week

During the week, NASA exhibits were placed throughout the Capitol complex with educational activities and events also held on the Capitol lawn. In just one day, approximately 2,500 students visited the NASA exploration trailer that was located at the Capitol, and many of those students also received autographs from the astronauts who were in the Capitol’s rotunda.

An industry reception was held on March 4, which was hosted by 10 NASA industry partners: Jacobs, Lockheed Martin, The Boeing Company, United Space Alliance, Barrios Technology, MRI Technologies, Cimarron, Hamilton Sundstrand, GeoControl Systems, and MEI Technologies. In addition to Mitchell, Sen. Mike Jackson, Reps. John Davis, Larry Taylor and Ken Legler, Deputy JSC Director Dr. Ellen Ochoa and former JSC Director Lt. Gen. Jefferson Howell spoke to the approximately 150 attendees.

Over 350 guests attended the legislative luncheon on March 5 that was hosted by BAHEP's Aerospace Advisory Committee. The guests included more than 30 state senators and representatives. The AAC's mission is to promote continuing support and commitment to the space programs and space operations functions being implemented by NASA JSC. The committee recommends and implements initiatives to support the interests of NASA JSC and the local aerospace community.

From March 6-8, the NASA exploration trailer and exhibits, as well as educational activities and events, were located at the LBJ Library in Austin. The exploration trailer moved to the George W. Bush Library in College Station from March 9-12.

During each legislative session, BAHEP and NASA JSC educate and advise Texas legislators about the vital role that NASA plays in our daily lives, in the education of our children, and in the economy of the state. They will again be knocking on legislative doors in two years when the Texas legislature convenes in 2011.



Bob Mitchell, president of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership, speaks to a gathering of approximately 150 attendees during the industry reception held March 4, 2009, during Space Week Austin. Dr. Ellen Ochoa, deputy director, NASA Johnson Space Center, shown at right, also addressed the crowd as well as Sen. Mike Jackson, Reps. John Davis, Larry Taylor and Ken Legler, and former JSC Director Lt. Gen. Jefferson Howell.



Texas Governor Rick Perry took a moment from his busy schedule to meet with NASA advocates during Space Week Texas held March 4-12. Seated from left are: Cody Kelly, student; Bob Mitchell, president, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership; Mike Fossum, NASA astronaut; and Dr. Ellen Ochoa, former NASA astronaut and deputy director, NASA Johnson Space Center. (Photo courtesy of NASA)

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