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The X PRIZESM: The First Prize for Private Human Spaceflight

Future Associated Press Release

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Early this morning a team of twelve American entrepreneurs made history by launching three civilian citizens into Earth orbit aboard a privately built vehicle for an undisclosed price. The private spaceship completed four orbits around the Earth at an altitude of 150 nautical miles, for a trip which lasted approximately six hours. This represents the first orbital flight launched by a commercial venture. The tour operator, Orbital Expeditions, Inc., is billing the trip as the 'ultimate' in adventure travel and plans to offer the journey on a continuing basis. While the company has not yet published a price, experts estimate the price will run on the order of US \$100,000 for the orbital shot and US \$25,000 for a sub-orbital flight. The program includes a one-week vacation for training that, sources claim, is almost as much fun as the space voyage itself.

Orbital Expeditions is the same group of brilliant entrepreneurs who, two years earlier, stunned America and the rest of the world by winning the X PRIZE several weeks ahead of the competition. Their three-person spaceship successfully completed a sub-orbital flight with a peak altitude of 68 nautical miles and followed it with an encore performance only eight days later. The team of entrepreneurs and engineers won both the US \$10,000,000 grand prize and the hearts and dreams of people around the world.

Mission: The X PRIZE competition has been created for the purpose of accelerating the private development of low-cost, reusable spaceships that will provide commercial human access to space and develop a space tourism industry. For thirty years the general public has waited for an opportunity to enjoy the space frontier on a first-hand basis. The X PRIZE Foundation is now working to make space travel possible for all people. The spaceships that compete for the X PRIZE are required to carry people and will open not only the space tourism industry, but will also enable rapid intercontinental passenger and cargo transport. Through a series of constructive competitions, The X PRIZE Foundation will educate the general public about using space for fun, profit, and the benefit of humanity.

Inspiration: The X PRIZE was inspired by the early aviation prizes of the 20th century, and, in particular, the spectacular trans-Atlantic flight of Charles Lindbergh in *The Spirit of St. Louis*. Lindbergh dared to cross the Atlantic Ocean in order to win the US \$25,000 Orteig prize, established in 1919 by wealthy New York entrepreneur Raymond Orteig. Lindbergh's 1927 flight was one of the most successful technological demonstrations in history. Using the best commercial technology of his day, Lindbergh proved that long distance air travel was feasible. Through a smaller, faster, better approach to aviation, Lindbergh and his nine St. Louis financial supporters, the *Spirit of St. Louis Organization*, showed that a small professional team could outperform a large, government-style effort.

Action: The X PRIZE Foundation was established in 1994 as an educational, non-profit, [501(c)3] corporation dedicated to inspiring private, entrepreneurial advancements in space travel. On May 18th, 1996, the X PRIZE Foundation established St. Louis as its international headquarters and accepted the financial backing of the *NEW SPIRIT OF SAINT LOUISSM Organization*, a group of prominent St. Louis business leaders helping The X PRIZE Foundation to achieve its goals and to bring St. Louis to the forefront of the space business sector.

Vision: The X PRIZE will create a new generation of space heroes. Within the next few years, dozens of teams from around the world will pursue the X PRIZE. These teams will be competitors in the great private space race of the new millennium.

Space travel for private citizens will be dramatically accelerated by the combination of private enterprise and competition-minded technical experimentation. Spaceship designs unlike anything yet seen will result from the unconstrained creativity of private enterprise and the entrepreneurial mind. X PRIZE competitors will use both existing technologies and newly developed designs in innovative ways to reduce the cost of building and operating space vehicles.

Sooner rather than later, a skilled team will win the X PRIZE. A modern day Charles Lindbergh will shatter the popular mindset that only large governments can operate human spaceflight programs. The winning spaceship will be capable of safely carrying three people to orbital altitudes on a regular basis. At the apex of their journey these tourist astronauts will experience zero gravity, peer down at the Earth and its curvature from far above the limits of the atmosphere, and look upon such a star-studded sky as cannot even be imagined by those who have not traveled into space.

The X PRIZE competitors will commercialize their spaceship designs and offer YOU a chance to fly into space on a regular basis. The X PRIZE competitors will advance space transportation technology and set the stage for a global space tourism marketplace by proving the viability, affordability and accessibility of commercialized sub-orbital spaceflight. A new paradigm will usher in the era of low-cost, private space tourism!

The US \$10,000,000 X PRIZE: During the first six months of 1996, The X PRIZE Foundation raised more than \$1 million in contributions from a group of prominent St. Louis business leaders known as the *NEW SPIRIT OF SAINT LOUIS* Organization, named in honor of the group who backed Charles Lindbergh almost 70 years ago. These funds will support the ongoing educational and community outreach mission of The X PRIZE Foundation, including the *NEW SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS* Awards described below. The X PRIZE Foundation is currently working with a number of potential sponsors for the US \$10,000,000 X PRIZE purse both within and beyond the St. Louis community. The X PRIZE Foundation expects to announce an agreement for sponsorship of the X PRIZE by the end of 1996.

Education: The X PRIZE Foundation is an educational, non-profit, [501(c)3] organization. The X PRIZE Foundation distributes educational materials and hosts academic events for the general public. Currently The X PRIZE Foundation is working with the Association of Space Explorers (ASE) to host hands-on learning events for communities. The X PRIZE Foundation also cooperates with other educational institutions such as the St. Louis Science Center, the National Space Society (NSS), and Students for the Exploration and Development of Space (SEDS) on various projects.

NEW SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS Awards: Each year, The X PRIZE Foundation will award up to four *NEW SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS* Awards worth US \$25,000 each - the same amount as the 1927 Orteig Prize. These cash awards will go to those individuals who, during the past year, make the strongest contribution towards the creation of low-cost, reusable spaceships. The X PRIZE Foundation will solicit input from experts around the world and seek to reward the genius, boldness and initiative of those who contribute towards the dream of opening the space frontier for the general public. The awards will be made each May at a ceremony held at the St. Louis Science Center.