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Space Elevator Games to take place at the 2006 X PRIZE Cup in New Mexico

August 08, 2006 (Los Angeles, CA) The X PRIZE Foundation and the Spaceward Foundation have signed an agreement that will bring the Space Elevator Games, a NASA Centennial Challenge, to the 2006 X PRIZE Cup in Las Cruces, New Mexico. More than 20 teams are expected to compete for \$400,000 at the Las Cruces International Airport on October 20-21, 2006.

“We are very excited to welcome the Elevator Games to the X PRIZE Cup.” Said X PRIZE Founder and Chairman Dr. Peter H. Diamandis. “Each year, we will bring together the most exciting spectator events and competitions in the space industry and this agreement with the Spaceward Foundation is a great step towards accomplishing our goal.”

The Space Elevator is a revolutionary space transportation system based on a ribbon that extends from a ship-borne anchor to a counterweight well beyond geo-synchronous orbit. The ribbon is kept taut due to the rotation of the earth (and that of the counterweight around the earth). Electric vehicles, called climbers, ascend the ribbon using electricity generated by solar panels lit by a ground-based high-power beam of light.

The objective of a space elevator is to make access to space easy, safe, and affordable. At under \$100 per pound, the estimated cost of transporting materials and people to space is *100 times less expensive* than today's method utilizing rockets. Low cost access to space, and the substantial carrying capacity of one or more space elevators will allow mankind to reach into space on an unprecedented scale.

This is the second year for the Space Elevator Games, last year's competition matched 12 competitors against each other. This year the competition has heated up to include more than 20 competitors from all over the globe.

The Space Elevator was first proposed in the 1960's by Yuri Artsutanov, a Russian engineer, as a far-reaching engineering concept. The scientific principles underlying it are well understood and all the fundamental materials and technologies required for construction of an elevator exist today in some form. The present Space Elevator design was conceived by Dr. Brad Edwards working in conjunction with NASA's Institute for Advanced Concepts (NIAC).

"We are thrilled to be working with the X PRIZE foundation for the second annual Space Elevator Games" said Ben Shelef, Founder of the Spaceward Foundation. "With an expected attendance of 20,000 people, the X PRIZE CUP venue is a perfect event to showcase and validate the worlds leading space elevator technologies." This year's challenge will feature teams from around the world competing for \$400,000 of prize money, and it promises to be a spectacular competition."

This is the second of the NASA Centennial Challenges to take place at the X PRIZE Cup. The first, announced in May of 2006, was the \$2m Lunar Lander Challenge. The Lunar Lander Challenge will take place at the X PRIZE Cup in Las Cruces, New Mexico on October 20-21, 2006. As the world's first space show, the X PRIZE Cup is the only annual event where the entire family can visit to see the next generation of spaceships up close and in the sky.

The Spaceward Foundation is a public-funds non-profit organization dedicated to furthering space science and technology in education and in the public mindshare. Spaceward Foundation intends to bring together leaders from the academic, commercial and educational worlds and create a series of challenges, exhibits, and educational activities that will re-invigorate the nation's interest in space.

NASA's Centennial Challenges promotes technical innovation through a novel program of prize competitions. It is designed to tap the nation's ingenuity to make revolutionary advances to support the Vision for Space Exploration and NASA goals. NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate manages the program.

In 2004, the Ansari X PRIZE proved that offering a prize is an effective, efficient and economical model for accelerating breakthroughs in science and technology. Based on that success, the X PRIZE Foundation is now expanding their efforts to offer more prizes in the space industry, as well as, in the areas of health, energy, transportation, and education.

For more information about the Spaceward Foundation please visit: <http://www.spaceward.org>

For more information about the Space Elevator Games, please visit www.elevator2010.org

For more information about the X PRIZE Cup please visit: www.xpcup.com

For more information about Centennial Challenges on the Internet, visit: <http://centennialchallenges.nasa.gov>