

Competition Announcement

Microgravity Research Competition

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HEINLEIN TRUST AND SPACEX ANNOUNCE COMPETITION TO PROMOTE RESEARCH INNOVATION IN ZERO GRAVITY

Removing Gravity Offers New Understanding of Biological and Physical Processes

HOUSTON, TX - The Heinlein Prize Trust announces the Microgravity Research Competition to reward innovation in the use of microgravity to advance biotech, nanotech, combustion, metallurgy, and other fields. Sponsored by the Trust and Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX), the competition offers a \$25,000 prize and transportation to and from Low Earth Orbit for the winning experiment aboard a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft.

"Decades of demonstrations have shown that the microgravity of space provides a unique window on biological and physical processes," said Art Dula, Trustee of the Heinlein Prize Trust. "Because of substantial recent funding by NASA and the private sector, access to microgravity will soon be more commonplace. This opens an incredibly exciting opportunity for the research community," Dula said.

The winning experiment will be launched into Earth orbit aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon spacecraft. NASA recently selected Falcon 9 / Dragon to transport cargo to the International Space Station.

The Microgravity Research Competition is open to U.S. universities and non-profits organizations with industry partners. The winning team will also get to witness the launch of their experiment from Cape Canaveral, Fla.

"SpaceX is excited to offer our Dragon spacecraft as a platform for in-space experimentation services to mainstream researchers," said Elon Musk, SpaceX CEO and CTO. "We plan to fly 'DragonLab' missions starting in 2010 for this express purpose," Musk said.

In space, there is no gravity-induced convection, sedimentation, hydrodynamic shear force, hydrostatic pressure, or mass transfer, according to the competition announcement. Experiments in microgravity can reveal novel mechanisms fundamental to cell processes, disease processes, and the adaptation of living systems to changes in physical forces, it said.

The announcement, available at www.labflight.com, provides an overview of microgravity's practical applications and details on the competition. Proposals are due on March 20, 2009.

The application and judging process will be supported by the Rice Alliance for

Technology and Entrepreneurship. The winner will be announced on April 18, 2009 at the Awards Banquet for the 2009 Rice Business Plan Competition hosted by the Rice Alliance.

"We very pleased to participate in this important competition," said Brad Burke, managing director, Rice Alliance, "because of the important role of commercializing the promising technology research and innovations".

About Heinlein Prize Trust

The Heinlein Prize Trust is a non-profit foundation which promotes the commercial uses of space. It provides financial prizes to commercial space entrepreneurs, enhances public awareness of commercial space, and uses space to inspire students about opportunities of the next frontier. For more information, see www.heinleinprize.com.

About SpaceX

SpaceX is developing a family of launch vehicles and spacecraft intended to increase the reliability and reduce the cost of both manned and unmanned space transportation, ultimately by a factor of ten. With the Falcon 1 and Falcon 9 vehicles, SpaceX offers highly reliable/cost-efficient light, medium and heavy lift capabilities for spacecraft insertion into any orbital altitude and inclination. In addition, the Dragon spacecraft provides Earth to LEO transport of pressurized and unpressurized instruments, cargo, and crew, including resupply to the International Space Station (ISS) in 2010.

SpaceX was recently awarded a Cargo Resupply Services contract by NASA. The \$1.6B contract includes 12 flights between 2010 and 2015 with a guaranteed minimum of 20,000 kg to be transported to the ISS.

Founded in 2002, the SpaceX team now numbers over 650, with corporate headquarters in Hawthorne, California. For more information, please visit www.spacex.com.

About Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship

The Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship (Rice Alliance) is Rice University's flagship initiative devoted to the support of technology commercialization, entrepreneurship, and the launch of technology companies.

Since inception, the Rice Alliance has assisted in the launch of more than 230 technology start-ups which have raised more than \$500 million in early-stage capital.

The Rice Alliance is host to the Rice Business Plan Competition, the largest and richest business plan competition in world. Thirty-six graduate schools compete for over \$700,000 in prizes each year.