



NEWS RELEASE

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LASM to Share NASA Grant

BATON ROUGE, LA — Efforts to educate the public on the future of space exploration were boosted Wednesday, when NASA awarded a \$904,000 grant over three years to the Louisiana Art & Science Museum (LASM) and several partners. In collaboration with the Houston Museum of Natural Science, Rice University, and four producer-vendors, LASM will oversee the creation of the Future Space Project, designed to increase awareness and stimulate public excitement and support for NASA's new human spaceflight program.

As NASA prepares for its final space shuttle flights, many Americans remain unaware of the shuttle's retirement or of the future human spacecraft options being considered. The goal of the Future Space Project is to educate the public using newly developed, immersive virtual experiences. Over the next three years, LASM and its partners will produce and distribute two planetarium shows, interactive spacecraft simulators, software for the World Wide Web and space-themed kiosks, and educational videos. The programs will reach an estimated two million Americans by the completion of the project.

LASM is one of only nine informal education providers in the U.S. receiving a total of \$7 million from NASA's Competitive Program for Science Museums and Planetariums. Because most grants from NASA are dedicated to research, LASM planetarium director Jon Elvert says this award represents a rare opportunity for public programming and is a source of pride. "This nationally recognized grant is another bright star of achievement for Baton Rouge and its communities, especially on the heels of the planetarium securing the 2012 International Planetarium Society (IPS) conference," said Elvert.

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IPS's 21st biennial conference will be hosted by LASM's Irene W. Pennington Planetarium July 22-26, 2012.

Congress initiated NASA's Competitive Program for Science Museums and Planetariums in 2008. The first group of projects began in 2009. For more information about NASA's education programs, visit <http://www.nasa.gov/education>.

For more information about LASM, visit <http://www.lasm.org>.

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