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California Space Authority

MEDIA ALERT

June 12, 2008

Competition Rises for NASA's Regolith Challenge—Record Numbers in Teams, Dollars and Machines

(Los Angeles, CA) – Twenty-five teams from across the United States, a record number, have registered to compete for the upcoming 2008 Regolith Excavation Challenge. Expectations are high that someone will take the NASA prize of \$750,000 this year, up from \$250,000 last year, given the sheer number of challengers and sophisticated designs geared to compete.

WHAT'S THE EVENT

2008 Regolith Excavation Challenge is one of NASA Centennial Challenges that invites the public to create devices beneficial in advancing space exploration and development. The Regolith Excavation Challenge requires inventors to build a roving lunar excavator that in 30 minutes can "autonomously navigate, excavate, and transfer over 150 kg of simulated lunar regolith" in a collector bin.

WHY COVER IT?

Staff writers, reporters, producers, and freelancers will find this a relevant and timely story. The newsworthy and beneficial aspects are listed below:

- Anticipation is high that a winner will take the prize. Last year, media coverage included notable news-gathering organizations like AP, The Discovery Channel, New York Times Magazine, WIRED Magazine, BBC Radio, LAUNCH Magazine, Planetary Society Radio, New Scientist Magazine and interested news organs in countries like China, Japan, UK, Israel and Spain. Having a reporter, writer, or photojournalist at the event gives an opportunity for exclusive materials and interviews on this historic event.
- The excavating lunar rovers make superb visuals for print, TV, and Internet newsgathering entities.
- News coverage continues to rise on events related to the moon given the upcoming anniversary of the lunar landing by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin in 1969. Moon stories are very much in demand right now.
- CSA has made it easy to generate storyline material through our "media packet" that contains background information, media protocols, story angles, sources, authorized quotes, and visitor information for national and regional media representatives planning to attend. Literally, we have handed media professionals the tools to make a great story.

WHO'S WHO?

NASA is putting up the winning prize money: \$500,000 for 1st Place, \$150,000 for 2nd Place, and \$100,000 for 3rd Place. California Space Authority (CSA) and the College of Engineering, Cal Poly University, San Luis Obispo are co-hosts in organizing the everything up to, during, and after the event. The California Business, Transportation and Housing (BTH) Agency is a key sponsor. California Space Education Workforce Institute (CSEWI) is the administering agent at the event.

WHEN & WHERE

The competition takes place on Saturday, August 2, 2008 from 7 am through early evening at the College of Engineering (CENG), Cal Poly University, San Luis Obispo, CA. Closest airports are in San Luis Obispo (5 minutes away), Santa Maria (30 minutes away), Santa Barbara (115 minutes away). The campus is off the 101 Fwy, 3 ½ hours north of LA and 3 ½ hours south of San Jose.

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