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California Space Authority
Contact: Randall Echevarria
916-551-1543

randall.echevarria@californiaspaceauthority.org



Virtual Space Center Encourages STEM Disciplines

SACRAMENTO – The California Space Authority (CSA) in conjunction with its sister organization, the California Space Education and Workforce Institute (CSEWI), announced today their new website, the virtual California Space Education Center. The California Space Education Center is a web-based research, education and workforce collaboratory that aims to increase interest and show relevance of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines, expose students to consecutive steps in the STEM career pipeline, and provides opportunities for students and potential entrepreneurs to become involved in a community of participatory learning focused around STEM careers. The virtual California Space Education Center will act as the precursor to a physical California Space Center - a multi-faceted, multi-year project that may potentially be built at Vandenberg Air Force Base. The intent of the center is to inspire and engage young people with space, science, math and engineering educational activities and offer space-related facilities, entertainment and cultural exhibits.

“The launch of the virtual California Space Education Center is building the foundation for a physical site in California,” said Andrea Seastrand, Executive Director of the California Space Authority. “As the virtual California Space Education Center continues to be developed, we are building on the concept projects, programs and educational activities for the future center. We envision an interactive website with additional learning opportunities, futuristic games and activities, and social networking capabilities all centered on space and STEM-related education.”

The California Space Education Center currently has information on NASA breaking news stories, NASA Centennial Challenges, space and science-based programs, aerospace-related STEM careers, and provides education materials on our planetary system among other things. One exciting program, called Mentor Match, has both organizations working with colleges throughout California connecting industry professionals to university students through an online, interactive mentoring program designed to attract students to aerospace and STEM related careers.

“California’s aerospace industry alone is expected to experience up to a 50% decline in our workforce within the next 5-10 years,” stated Jack Gregg, Executive Director of the California Space Education and Workforce Institute. “We are currently taking different approaches at helping to address this issue, and the virtual California Space Education Center is certainly one of them. This is yet another example of the work we are doing under the U.S. Department of Labor: Wired Initiative to inspire and engage the next generation workforce to pursue careers in STEM-related, aerospace-based careers.”

The California Space Education and Workforce Institute is a U.S. registered 501(c)(3) tax-deductible nonprofit charity. CSEWI's mission is to inspire parents, educators, and students to engage in California-based space-related education and to attract, integrate and retain a robust space workforce.

California Space Authority is a nonprofit organization supporting California's commercial, civil and national security space stakeholders. Governed by a statewide board of directors, CSA works closely with the State of California, industry, other government, education, workforce entities and academia to support space enterprise development and expansion statewide.



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Funding provided by Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration: WIRED Initiative

Another exciting key program housed on the virtual California Space Education Center is the California Space Enterprise Speakers Bureau. Work on the bureau began in January recruiting seasoned and new space professionals charged with inspiring and engaging the next generation workforce. They plan to do this by sending their speakers into classrooms throughout California where they can share their inspirational story about why they chose a career in the aerospace industry. Additionally, speakers will be available to discuss topics such as, space venturing, space finance, NASA, Department of Defense, Climate Change, Supply Chains, Professional Development, the Generation Gap and Generation Y Perspectives. Speakers will also be available for civic groups, charity events and conferences.

“As our speakers’ bureau continues to grow and we bring in additional expertise, we are confident that the California Space Enterprise Speakers Bureau will be the premiere one-stop-shop for speaker needs. In addition, the virtual California Space Education Center is poised to become California’s most innovative site in regards to aerospace-related STEM disciplines and space-themed entertainment,” concluded Seastrand.

For more information on the virtual California Space Education Center contact randall.echevarria@californiaspaceauthority.org or visit www.csewi.org/csec.

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