

ISPCS brings space leaders to Las Cruces

Sun-News editorial board

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Why have a bunch of investment bankers featured at a conference devoted to space flight?

Because, the International Symposium for Personal and Commercial Spaceflight, which wraps up today in Las Cruces, is about much more than the miracles of science and the mysteries of space. It is about the real-world business decisions being made each day

in the burgeoning space industry.

And so, Thomas F. Siems, assistant vice president and a senior economist for the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, was on hand to present an economic model for personal and commercial spaceflight. Greg Kennedy, founder and managing partner of Advection Growth Capital LLC and a former senior financial adviser to NASA, discussed public/private partnerships that could advance NASA's mission and help the space industry to grow.

The theme of this year's symposium is "Go For Purpose," organizer Pat Hynes said. The industry has been able to lure private investment, but needs to focus on sustaining its primary purpose of providing safe, reliable and affordable access to space for a variety of users, Hynes said.

"The purpose of ISPCS is the help grow the industry, and growth requires people," Hynes said. "The shared vision is to assure the evolution of the systems that take humans and cargo to space. The audience will hear from federal agency leaders who are partnering with the industry's purpose-driven founders and innovators.

“If ever there was a time and place to communicate our purpose as an industry, this is the time and ISPCS is the place,” Hynes said.

Some 35 speakers have been lined up for this year’s symposium, all experts on different areas of the commercial space industry.

On Thursday, Spaceport America CEO Dan Hicks will discuss his vision for the spaceport as a global port for access to space, from sub-orbital to deep space. Mike Moses, president of Virgin Galactic, will discuss plans to go beyond just space tourism, the company’s original intent. Moses envisions a commercial spaceline, similar to a commercial airline, with a fleet of ships to carry clients and payloads into suborbital space.

There will be technical presentations, panel discussions and lots of networking as leaders from throughout the industry come together to compare notes, gain inspiration and learn about the latest developments.

“When people with a common purpose come together and the setting enables relationship building, the value added of this type of conference is clear,” Hynes said. “You could stay home and watch the videos, but if you want to be in the industry, this is the conference where your role could expand. Every keynote address, panel discussion and networking opportunity gives attendees new ways to look at our end goal of getting more people into space. They leave inspired to take new action, and that is incredibly exciting as the curator, I look for this momentum and it’s there.”

We welcome all of those who have traveled to Las Cruces for this year’s symposium, and we hope that your time spent here will be both educational and inspirational.