



Spaceport America Cup is going virtual for 2021

February 16, 2021, Sierra County, NM- Spaceport America and partners Experimental Sounding Rocket Association (ESRA) have announced that the 2021 Spaceport America Cup will be held as a virtual event on June 18-20, 2021.



The 2021 Spaceport America Cup will be an online competition and technical conference. Student teams from across the globe will compete to win technical awards and one team will be selected as the overall 2021 Virtual Spaceport America Cup winner. In addition, teams will participate in interactive poster session reviews, hear from special guest speakers, and participate in technical forums on a variety of topics. The virtual event will also provide industry sponsors with the opportunity to interact with students for recruitment.

“The Spaceport America Cup is a highlight of our calendar and a special event the local community looks forward to hosting.” said Spaceport America’s Interim Executive Director Scott McLaughlin. “We hope that by making the competition

virtual this year, teams that were selected to compete in-person for 2021 will be able to join us as planned without the restrictions due to COVID-19. We want to make sure the students do not miss out on the opportunity to showcase their hard work.”

Cliff Olmsted, President and Chairperson of the Experimental Sounding Rocket Association (ESRA) said “ESRA is very excited to host this virtual engineering competition that continues our tradition of strong US and International participation. We hope to see lots of teams join us from across the globe.”

The Spaceport America Cup is the world’s largest intercollegiate rocketry engineering contest (IREC) and has been held in New Mexico since 2017. Over 1,700 students and faculty come to Southern New Mexico for the annual IREC competition. Drawn by the opportunity to collaborate and compete at a world-class spaceport facility, they represent the best and brightest from more than 150 institutions located across the world.

The annual Spaceport America Cup was canceled in 2020 due to the global pandemic and the decision to make the event virtual for 2021 was made to accommodate the restrictions teams are facing across the globe.

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Spaceport America (<https://www.spaceportamerica.com>) is the first purpose-built commercial spaceport in the world. The FAA-licensed launch complex, situated on 18,000 acres adjacent to the U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range in southern New Mexico, has a rocket friendly environment of 6,000 square miles of restricted airspace, low population density, a 12,000-foot by 200-foot runway, vertical launch complexes, and about 340 days of sunshine and low humidity.

Some of the most respected companies in the commercial space industry are tenants at Spaceport America: [Virgin Galactic](#), [HAPSMobile/ AeroVironment](#), [UP Aerospace](#), and [SpinLaunch](#). Other customers include [Boeing](#), [EXOS Aerospace](#) and [Swift Engineering](#).

EXPERIMENTAL SOUNDING ROCKET ASSOCIATION

The Experimental Sounding Rocket Association (ESRA) is a non-profit organization founded in 2003 for the purpose of fostering and promoting engineering knowledge and experience in the field of rocketry. ESRA's primary focus is providing safe and exciting opportunities for academic groups to compete in aerospace challenges. ESRA has operated the Intercollegiate Rocket Engineering Competition (IREC) since 2006. In 2017, ESRA partnered with Spaceport America to expand the IREC into the Spaceport America Cup. Visit <http://www.soundingrocket.org> for more information.

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