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SPACEPORT AMERICA®

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Scott A. McLaughlin Picked to Head New Mexico's Spaceport America

SPACEPORT AMERICA - Scott A. McLaughlin, a New Mexico native and a long-time business and engineering professional, has been selected by the New Mexico Spaceport Authority Board of Directors as the new executive director of Spaceport America, Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced today.

McLaughlin graduated from New Mexico State University with a B.S. in Electrical Engineering, and has worked at several government agencies, including the U.S. Army Research Laboratory and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), as well as in the private sector with tech and engineering companies.



Scott A. McLaughlin

He served as Director of Business Development at Spaceport America prior to being named interim Executive Director of Spaceport America in July 2020.

“Scott brings deep knowledge and extensive experience to the management of New Mexico’s Spaceport America,” Secretary Keyes said. “He has proven himself as a skilled administrator who can collaborate with employees, the state, and our innovative business partners to ensure Spaceport America operates safely and continues to drive job growth in Southern New Mexico.”

McLaughlin has a lifelong passion for space and was influenced by the iconic 1968 Earthrise photo taken aboard Apollo 8 by Astronaut Bill Anders “Due to human ingenuity and our desire for exploration, the [Earthrise] picture gave us a perspective of ourselves and our world we never had before,” McLaughlin said. “It is important for humanity’s future that more and more people see our planet in that way.”

After graduating from NMSU, McLaughlin moved to Colorado where he eventually established a radar design and manufacturing business. He traveled the world installing, maintaining, and marketing specialized wind radar systems. His innovative designs support space launch, test ranges, aviation operations, weather service networks, atmospheric research, pollution studies, and shipboard wind measurements. Consumers of the radar systems include research and defense agencies such as NASA, NOAA, DOE, U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and universities, serving customers in Spain, Taiwan, India, UAE, Thailand, Kuwait, Mexico, Samoa, and Colombia as well.

McLaughlin returned to New Mexico in 2018 and was hired as an engineer at Spaceport America in 2019. He was soon promoted to director of business development. McLaughlin says the Spaceport has grown into a hotbed of commercial aerospace activity.

“The important next step for Spaceport America is to increase our efforts to find aerospace companies with activities that benefit New Mexico with higher-paying jobs and the Spaceport with new revenue,” McLaughlin said. “As a third generation New Mexican, and a ‘boomerang’ that left the state for 25 years, I can tell you the Spaceport brings something special and unique to the state.”

McLaughlin, who plays trombone and drums, met his wife Cindy in the NMSU Pride Band. The couple has two children and have been married 33 years. Before the pandemic, they played in the Mesilla Valley Concert Band and other ensembles. He is currently president of the Optimist Club in Las Cruces.

[Spaceport America](#) is the first purpose-built commercial spaceport in the world and is situated on 18,000 acres adjacent to the U.S. Army White Sands Missile Range with 6,000 square miles of restricted airspace, enjoying 340 days of sunshine.

Tenants at Spaceport America include Virgin Galactic, HAPSMobile/AeroVironment, UP Aerospace, and SpinLaunch. Others who use the facility for testing and launches include Boeing, EXOS Aerospace, and C6 Launch Systems.

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