

To: Small Business Entrepreneurs, Concerned Citizens, Corporate and Community Leaders;

The end of the Space Shuttle era is rapidly approaching. For more than twenty years Florida citizens have been joining with state organizations from Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Ohio in an annual trip to Washington, DC. The primary purpose of these visits is to meet with as many members of Congress as possible; and, in doing so, to solicit their support in assuring adequate funding for America's space exploration program. In consideration of recent developments in the current administration's budget submission to Congress, this annual trek is more important than any of the previous missions. Indeed, the future of our space program could be at stake. What we are witnessing is a continual and long-term erosion of budgetary support from Congress, past and present. It's not that there's a lack of money---there's a lack of will from this and previous administrations (and previous sessions of Congress). We need to not only stop the downward trend in the budget support; but, we also need to affect a reversal in the trend, and reestablish a robust space program.

The administration has not only recommended cancellation of the Constellation Program (follow on to the Space Shuttle); but, it is also recommending many other programmatic changes that could endanger the continuance of America's long-established leadership role in space exploration. It is imperative that concerned citizens convince our leaders in Washington that they are on the wrong course for continuing our excellence in the space arena; and, that we would like for them to reject this attempt to further diminish our capabilities. We, as Americans, deserve better. We deserve a strong and effective space program that will continue to reward our citizens with technological advancements that improve and enhance our quality of life on a never-ending basis.

These annual visits to Washington are organized and coordinated by Citizens for Space Exploration (CSE); and (in Florida), assisted by the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce. We need your support and we need it in two areas. Primarily, your donations will be used to host legislators during the visit, and to sponsor qualified college students who will travel with us on this important mission (they are the future!!). Secondly (and, as importantly), we need you to travel with us to Washington to assist in visiting as many members of Congress that can be scheduled. It is estimated that the total cost for each traveler (including all travel expenses) is approximately \$1500-\$2000 for the four-day excursion. Please consider traveling with us and / or sponsoring a qualified and deserving student.

Attached is a CSE "Invitation and Itinerary" leaflet that will give you details of the trip, and allow you to register, personally. A block of rooms has been reserved to ease in travel planning. You may help us financially by making donations to the Cocoa Beach Area Chamber of Commerce on line at: www.cocoabeachchamber.com; or by phone (Linda Webster, 321-454-2028).

As we learned in 2005 when our community reversed a Pentagon decision to relocate The Naval Ordnance Test Unit, the people do have a voice. We can make a difference. Come join us in this national effort to maintain America's preeminence in space.

Sincerely,

Randy Harris
Chairman
Cocoa Beach Area
Chamber of Commerce

Jon McBride
Capt. USN/NASA
Former Shuttle Astronaut
Co-Chair Florida CSE

Frank Dibello
President
Space Florida
Co-Chair Florida CSE