

In the news

Student rocket launch rescheduled for May 1

After analyzing the results of a test on the parachute system for the SL-5 rocket, New Mexico Space Grant Consortium (NMSGC) Director Patricia Hynes has rescheduled the SL-5 Student Launch to Friday, May 20.

Engineers from UP Aerospace conferred with NMSGC launch officials and it was determined that, even though the drop test was successful, a portion of flight hardware became entangled during recovery and was damaged. Safe return of the students' 27 onboard experiments is a requirement of the launch, Hynes said, so in order to meet the mission specifications, the launch has been rescheduled to Friday, May 20 at Spaceport America.

Hynes said she is optimistic about the student launch, even though it needed to be rescheduled.

"A lot of planning and effort has gone into this launch, and the final testing of the recovery systems is important to make sure the experiments return successfully," she said.

The student launch program was created by the NMSGC to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs among area students. This program provides annual access to space for student experiments at the end of the academic year.

Experiments include 35 sensors such as electromagnetic field, carbon dioxide detectors, radiation, acceleration, temperature, pressure and electricity sensors. Descriptions of the student experiments are available online at www.launchnm.com.

Mayfield to host robotics contest

The Mayfield High School Math, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) program will host a regional Botball robotics

competition in the MHS gymnasium from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, April 2.

MHS MESA team sponsor Lorraine Bridges said the competition is for high school students from throughout New Mexico and El Paso. The Botball Educational Robotics Program engages students "in a team-oriented robotics competition based on national science education standards. By designing, building, programming and documenting robots, students use science, engineering, technology, math and writing skills in a hands-on project that reinforces their learning," according to www.botball.org.

During the competition, computer-programmed Lego robots will be built by students to perform specific tasks. There is no charge to attend the competition.

'Moon buggy' race draws high-schoolers

Teams from two LCPS high schools will participate in the 18th annual Great Moon Buggy Race in Huntsville, Ala., April 1-2, with funding from the Spaceport Gross Receipts Tax and a moon buggy grant provided through the Southern New Mexico Science, Engineering, Mathematics and Aerospace Academy.

The two schools are Mayfield High School and San Andres High School in collaboration with the Mesilla Valley Training Center. This is the first time the schools are sending teams to the contest inspired by NASA moon exploration.

The Great Moon Buggy competition requires students to build a human-powered vehicle that can navigate a half-mile course with 17 obstacles in the quickest amount of time. The vehicle must be built and designed by the students, and it must fit inside a 4-foot-by-4-foot-by-4-foot container. The vehicle must be carried by the two drivers (one male, one female) 20 feet prior to assembly. Finally, the