

Student Experiments Hurlled Into Space « Coalition for Space Exploration

<http://spacecoalition.com/blog/student-experiments-hurled-into-space>

June 2, 2011



UP Aerospace rocket liftoff from New Mexico carries student experiments to the edge of space. Credit: Spaceport America

SPACEPORT AMERICA, New Mexico – NASA’s Summer of Innovation had a special liftoff here on May 20 with a powerful suborbital rocket scooting to the edge of space.

Among the payloads riding atop an UP Aerospace SpaceLoft XL rocket were 27 student-built investigations.

Spaceport America is located near Truth or Consequences, New Mexico – a sprawling enterprise that is the world’s first commercial spaceport.

The launch and the yearlong education plan to construct experiments were sponsored by NASA through the Summer of Innovation Program. Students from New Mexico, Texas and Arizona built the experiments, making use of sensors to gauge such items as electromagnetic fields, carbon dioxide and radiation levels, as well as acceleration, temperature, and pressure.

Some 800 students and their families and members of the public were on-hand to watch the early morning launch. After a 15-minute flight over 70 miles straight up into space, the parachute-recovered student experiments were given back to those that had built the flight hardware.

Working together with partners UP Aerospace and Spaceport America, the New Mexico Space Grant Consortium sponsored the Education Launch to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Predictable access to space

New Mexico Space Grant Consortium Director, Patricia Hynes noted that predictable access to space for student experiments at the end of the academic year helps get going-to-space into the workday of the teacher in the classroom.

“Today’s launch has inspired a lot of interest in aerospace and space research,” Hynes said, for both students and teachers.

The New Mexico Space Grant Consortium is a member of the congressionally funded National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program that is administered by NASA and sponsored by New Mexico State University.

Jerry Larson, President of UP Aerospace — the company that designed and operates the rocket — said the rocket performed flawlessly. “After returning from space, the rocket and its payload were successfully recovered. All in all, this looks to be a perfect flight,” he said.

To better appreciate the mission and the collection of student-built experiments, go to:

<http://www.launchnm.com/>

By Leonard David