

NASA gives students taste of space

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CARLSBAD — New Mexico State University-Carlsbad hosted the NASA Space Grant Summer of Innovation Launch to Learn Program for middle school students in July.

Some objectives of the program were to explore aspects of space with the students, to do research and hands-on experiments related to space such as micro-gravity, gravity-driven fluid flow and to create and launch a variety of rockets. The capstone project of the camp was to devise an experiment to enter into competition for a space on the Sounding Rocket Launch in April 2011.

Barbara Rempel, a teacher at Carlsbad High School became involved in the program and recruited students for Carlsbad.

"We had a small group of

18 students, but they were the best group of middle school students I could imagine," Rempel said. "From the hands-on activities to the development of our competition work for the experiment, the video, the launch patch artwork and essays, the students were hard-working and highly motivated to succeed. For the experiment, the students decided to compare radiation levels here on Earth, namely on the CHS football field, to that of the levels at 71 miles into space, the apogee of the Sounding Rocket."

In their quest to accomplish this, given constraints typical of real world engineering, the students researched the options, and finally found a solution that will meet the space and weight constraints. To sweeten the pie, and increase the

chances of the Carlsbad team's experiment being selected, the CEO of Vernier Software and Technology has given them an equip-

ment grant worth about \$660.

Rempel wishes to thank NMSU-Carlsbad and NM MESA for their generous support of the program. "We probably had the best facility in the state in the Engineering Department at NMSU-C," Rempel said. "We had computers and large tables for the hands-on activities. We also had excellent support from the staff. All were extremely helpful. Lori Byers, in particular, served as a warm and friendly facilitator for our program throughout the entire time. Please visit YouTube and watch our video, titled "Carlsbad Summer of Innovation — 2010".



Submitted photo
Tyler Strickland and Johnathan Furse look on as Bailey Wallace pumps air pressure into his 2 liter bottle rocket at the NASA Space Grant Summer of Innovation Launch to Learn Program for middle school students held last month at NMSU-C. Average apogee was approximately 75 feet in the air.