

Mars Settlement Design Competition

In just one weekend, more than 100 high-school students departed from Johnson Space Center and traveled 60 years into the future.

Over the weekend of Feb. 21-23, JSC hosted its annual Mars Settlement Design Competition. The competition is an exciting industry simulation game for high-school sophomores, juniors and seniors in the Houston and southeast Texas area.

The competition scenario required the four competing student "companies" to design a base on Mars for almost 19,000 people in the year 2063. The winning students called their "company" Vulture Aviation.

This year 157 students attended the competition along with 15 teachers/chaperones. The students and teachers represented 54 different high schools and 34 school districts.

The driving forces behind the yearly event are Astronaut Bonnie Dunbar, who initiated the competitions at JSC five years ago; Norm Chaffee, InDyne, Inc. Consultant; and Mike Kincaid, Education and Student Programs Branch Chief.

This is the fifth year that JSC has sponsored this competition as part of its educational outreach activities during the National Engineers Week period in February.

In addition to JSC, the competition is sponsored and underwritten by Boeing, Dow, Clear Creek ISD and the Houston section of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

JSC also sponsors a similar competition at the White Sands Test Facility in October of each year. The WSTF competition has been active for four years. ❖



NASA JSC 2003e15030 Photo by Robert Markowitz

The competition judges discuss the students' proposals. From left are Beatriz Kelly-Serrato, Lockheed Martin Engineer in the Crew and Thermal Systems Division; Kerry Soileau, Aerospace Technologist in the Avionics and Software Office; Shirley Brandt, Hernandez Engineering Scientist Specialist in the Automation, Robotics and Simulation Division and Astronaut Bonnie Dunbar, Assistant Director for University Affairs and Research and founder of the JSC and WSTF competitions.



NASA JSC 2003e15028 Photo by Robert Markowitz

Students collaborate to create their proposed Mars bases during the competition.



NASA JSC 2003e15029 Photo by Robert Markowitz

Here, high-school students are hard at work planning their proposed Mars bases.

Background Photo NASA JSC 2003e15031 Photo by Robert Markowitz

Participants in the Mars Settlement Design Competition catch up on some much-needed rest.

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