

NASA hosts conference exploring commercial interest in station living quarters

NASA invited private industry to Houston from Aug. 24 - 26 to participate in a conference that explored potential commercial interest in a government and industry partnership to build the crew habitation module for the International Space Station.

"NASA is dedicated to the commercial use of space and fostering private enterprise on the new frontier," said Dan Tam, special assistant to the NASA administrator for commercialization. "On Earth, it has been demonstrated time and time again that with market support, private industry can do a better job than the government. We expect the same will be true in space."

NASA needs a crew-quarters module that will house at least four crewmembers. The module should also include bedrooms, a kitchen, a pantry, a dining and meeting area, videoconferencing and entertainment equipment, windows, storage space, exercise equipment and a medical examination room.

The Habitation Module Commercialization Conference was held at the Nassau Bay Hilton and Marina Hotel.

The conference explored the formation of a commercial consortium that would own, use and maintain all or part of the module. NASA would be one of many module users and customers of the consortium.

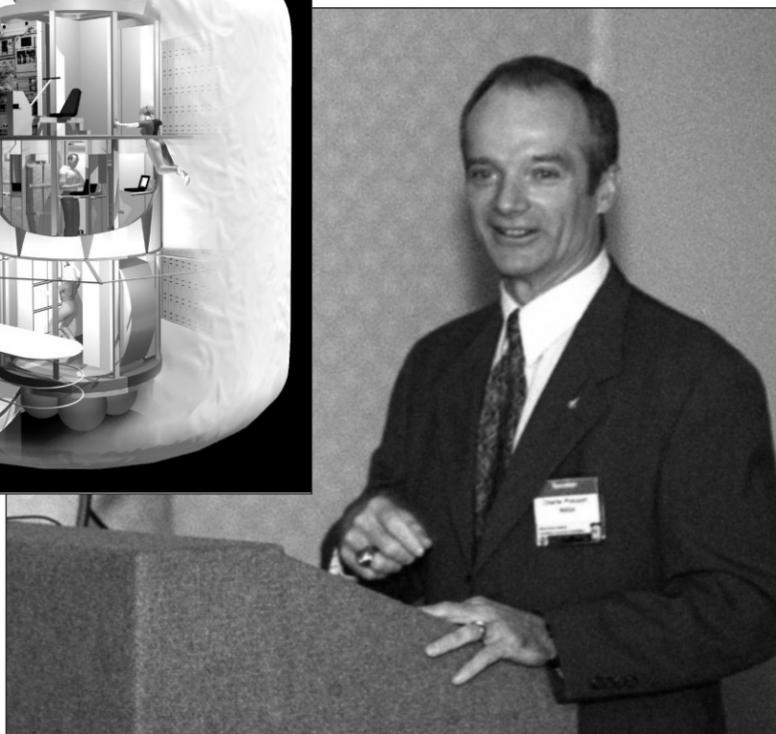
Current station plans specify that the module be a traditional metallic design similar to other International Space Station modules. A more recent NASA concept has proposed an innovative, space fabric version of the living quarters module. Conference participants considered existing designs and new ideas for the module.



The habitation module will be launched from the space shuttle and attached to the station in November 2004. In addition to aerospace industries, NASA is hoping to attract other businesses and

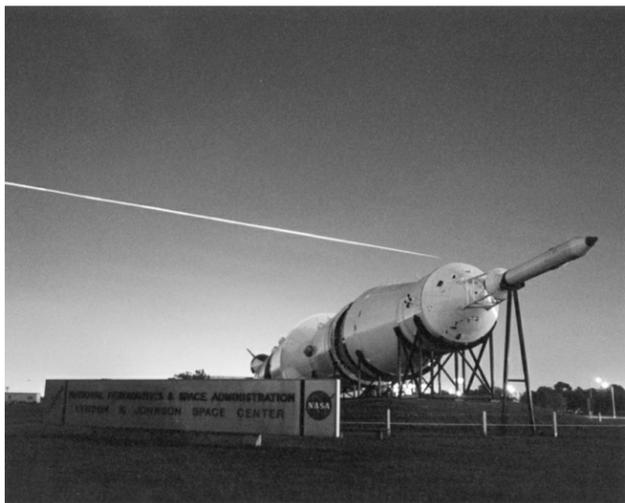
investors to spur innovation in the commercial use of space. These non-aerospace companies may have ideas related to sponsorship, space tourism, entertainment, advertising, education or technology development.

This activity will serve as a pathfinder for other commercial uses of the International Space Station and commercial involvement in other NASA programs. ■



JSC Photo S99-10614 by Bill Stafford

NASA Astronaut Charlie Precourt, chief of the Astronaut Office, addresses those in attendance at the Habitation Module Commercialization Conference, providing a flight crew perspective on the merits of the station's baseline habitation module and the TransHab (inset) concept of a habitation module.



Best of Show
Brian Zemba

Winners of the Open House Photo Contest



Third Place
Harold Robertson



Second Place
Barton K. Gibson



First Place
Barton K. Gibson