

NASA Salutes SpaceShipOne Team

September 30 2004



[NASA](#) Administrator Sean O'Keefe congratulated the SpaceShipOne team on the second successful flight of a human on a private spacecraft. Administrator O'Keefe was in the Mojave Desert, Calif., today to watch SpaceShipOne pilot Mike Melvill take off and safely land.

"Burt Rutan and Paul Allen and the rest of the team are great examples of the kind of determination and creativity that is helping America achieve its exploration goals," Administrator O'Keefe said. "We at NASA applaud their terrific achievement today, as well as the spirit of competition behind the Ansari X Prize. We wish Mike continued safe travels to space," he said.

About the ANSARI X PRIZE Competition

In order to win the ANSARI X PRIZE, teams must build a safe/reusable space vehicle able to carry one pilot and the weight equivalent of two passengers 100km (62 miles) into sub-orbital space. The vehicle must be privately financed and safely launched twice within a two-week period. The first registered ANSARI X PRIZE team to complete this feat will win the \$10 million prize and spectacular trophy.

From the orbiting International Space Station, NASA astronaut Mike Fincke took note of the SpaceShipOne flight. "Well, it was nice that [cosmonaut] Gennady [Padalka] and I weren't the only two humans off the planet, even if it was only for a little while," he said during space-to-ground transmissions today. "So, good job and congratulations to the SpaceShipOne team!"

SpaceShipOne Second Flight

At 8:13 PDT September 29, SpaceShipOne (SS1) coasted above the 100 km altitude point and successfully completed the first of two X-Prize flights. The peak altitude reached was 337,500 ft. The motor was shut down when the pilot, Mike Melvill, noted that his altitude predictor exceeded the required 100 km mark. The motor burn lasted 77 seconds – 1 second longer than on the June 21st flight. Melvill was prepared to burn the motor up to 89 seconds, which indicates significant additional performance remains in SS1.

The second X-Prize flight is tentatively scheduled for Monday, October 4.

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