

New Mexico to be site of spaceport

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Officials from the London-based Virgin Galactic and New Mexico say they've signed an agreement to build a \$200 million spaceport.

Virgin Galactic agreed to locate its world headquarters and mission control facility at a 27-square-mile area in southern New Mexico.

Virgin Galactic is a company established by Richard Branson's Virgin Group to develop space tourism. The company said it will own and operate privately built spaceships that will allow affordable sub-orbital space tourism for the first time in history.

Virgin Galactic President Will Whitehorn said New Mexico is an ideal operations base: good climate, free airspace, low population density, high altitude and stunning scenery.

"We look forward to working together to make the 'Final Frontier' a reality for tens of thousands of pioneering space tourists," Whitehorn said. "Our activities will prove the commercial viability and excellent safety technology behind private personal spaceflight and give birth to a new industry in New Mexico."

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