

NASA plans 'moonbuggy' design competition

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NASA officials in Alabama are calling on the next generation of space explorers to design and race their lunar rovers in NASA's 14th "Great Moonbuggy Race."

The event at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala., is open to high school and college students, NASA said. Students must come up with their own versions of a lunar rover.

The teams are challenged to meet design standards set by scientists and engineers at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, where the original lunar rover was designed and tested before being driven by astronauts during the last three Apollo missions of the 1970s.

The first "Great Moonbuggy Race" was in 1994 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Apollo 11 lunar landing.

Teams will compete for the best time around a half-mile, simulated lunar course.

The deadline for schools to register for the competition is Feb. 1. The high school competition is scheduled for April 13, and college races are April 14. The event is sponsored by the Northrop Grumman Corp. of Los Angeles.

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