

World's first mission to the Moon's south pole announced

July 19 2013



(Phys.org) —The world's first mission to the South Pole of the Moon was announced today by the International Lunar Observatory Association (ILOA) and Moon Express, Inc. The private enterprise mission will be both scientific and commercial, and will deliver the International Lunar Observatory (ILO) to the Moon's South Pole aboard a Moon Express robotic lander, establishing permanent astrophysical observations and lunar commercial communications systems for professional and amateur researchers.

Moon Express will also utilize the mission to explore the Moon's South Pole for mineral resources and water. Lunar probes have provided compelling evidence of mineral and volatile deposits in the Moon's southern polar region where energy and resources may be abundant.

The ILO, with its 2-meter dish antenna, will be the world's first instrument to conduct international astrophysical observations and communications from the lunar surface, providing scientific research, commercial broadcasting and enabling Galaxy 21st Century education and "citizen science" on the Moon. The announcement was made during a NASA Lunar Science Institute conference at NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View, California.

"The ILO will demonstrate the value of the Moon for scientific study of the Galaxy, Moon, Earth, Sun and Stars," said Steve Durst, founder and director of the ILOA and Space Age Publishing Company. "We are a global consortium of scientists, educators, entrepreneurs and visionaries who seek to establish a scientific presence on the Moon followed by human exploration and eventual settlement." Space Age Publishing Company, ILOA's commercial affiliate, intends to broadcast its Space Calendar weekly and Lunar Enterprise Daily via the ILO. ILOA expects that the South Pole mission could take place as early as 2016 and contribute to humanity's growth as a multi-world species.

Moon Express is the mission partner in the venture, providing the [lunar lander](#), mission architecture and operations. The company was unveiled in August 2010 as a commercial lunar resource company and is partnered with NASA for its lunar lander development. Moon Express will send a series of robotic missions to the Moon in support of science, commerce and exploration starting in 2015.

The International Lunar Observatory is destined for a Malapert Mountain site near the Moon's South Pole for Galaxy / astronomy

observation and communication

"We are very excited to announce that our second Moon mission will be to the lunar South Pole to deliver the International Lunar Observatory and to prospect for resources," said Moon Express CEO Dr. Robert (Bob) Richards. "The mission will provide a historic landing in an unexplored region of the Moon that may harbor some of the greatest resource deposits in the solar system."

Earlier this year on May 25th, ILOA and Moon Express unveiled the ILO precursor instrument that will fly to the Moon in 2015 aboard the inaugural Moon Express mission. Details of the "ILO-X" flight instrument hardware are available [here](#). The ILO-X instrument was on public display and actively demonstrated during the Singularity University / Fox Studios "Backstage Pass to the Future" event on June 1st, 2013 in Los Angeles.

The ILO and its precursor will have an internet-based access and control system and will be the first private space telescope to operate from the lunar surface, available to researchers, educators and the general public through the internet, allowing the world to access Galaxy / astronomical images from the surface of the Moon and creating a new model of "citizen science" public participation and international collaboration.

Provided by Moon Express, Inc.

Citation: World's first mission to the Moon's south pole announced (2013, July 19) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-07-world-mission-moon-south-pole.html>

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