

NASA sees enthusiastic response to asteroid call for ideas

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NASA has received more than 400 responses to its request for information (RFI) on the agency's asteroid initiative, Deputy Administrator Lori Garver announced Friday.

"Under our plan, we're increasing the identification, tracking and exploration of asteroids, and the response to this initiative has been gratifying," said Garver, speaking at the Space Frontier Foundation's NewSpace 2013 conference in San Jose, Calif. "The aerospace industry, innovative small businesses and citizen scientists have many creative ideas and strategies for carrying out our [asteroid exploration mission](#) and helping us to protect our home planet from dangerous near-Earth objects."

Released June 18, the RFI was the first opportunity for industry and other potential partners, including private individuals, to offer ideas on planning for NASA's mission to redirect an asteroid for exploration by astronauts and the agency's asteroid grand challenge.

Garver noted about a third of the responses were in areas relevant to the asteroid grand challenge, which is to identify all asteroid threats to human population and know what to do about them. All other responses were related to the five mission components.

All the responses are being evaluated and rated. NASA will explore the highly rated responses for inclusion in future planning during a public workshop in September.

Grand challenges are ambitious goals on a national or global scale that capture the imagination and demand advances in innovation and breakthroughs in science and technology. NASA's asteroid grand challenge will support planetary defense by use of multi-disciplinary collaborations and a variety of partnerships with other government agencies, international partners, industry, academia, and citizen scientists.

The asteroid grand challenge complements NASA's mission to find and capture a near-Earth asteroid, redirect it to a stable lunar orbit and send humans to study it. The asteroid redirect mission is included in President Obama's fiscal year 2014 budget request for NASA, and leverages the agency's progress on its Space Launch System rocket, Orion spacecraft and cutting-edge technology development. The mission is one step in NASA's plan to send humans to Mars in the 2030s.

More information: www.nasa.gov/asteroidinitiative

Provided by NASA

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