

The Space Economy Rockets to New Heights

NASA is steadily planning a return to the New Frontier, and Saturday's successful launch of the first commercial flight to the International Space Station is a key step upon this journey.

As America sets itself back on course for deep space exploration under the aegis of the Artemis program, across the country companies are playing a critical role in designing, building, and testing new systems to enable permanent human habitation on the lunar surface. Not surprisingly, small businesses are at the core of these innovations. In fact, two-thirds of the supplier companies constructing the massive Artemis rocket that will launch astronauts to the Moon and Mars, the Space Launch System, are small businesses. In terms of numbers, that is 800 supplier companies across 43 states.

More impressive, recent Small Business Administration data shows that NASA provides \$2.8 billion per year directly to small businesses, with another \$3 billion subcontracted through larger companies. These small businesses currently provide the Artemis program with an array of material solutions and services that include design of guidance, navigation, and control systems, to the fabrication of structural components for crew module thermal protection.

Saturday's return to human spaceflight from the legendary launch facilities at Cape Canaveral highlight the historic relationship of commercial space companies to the colossal achievements of the past. With ever-increasing capital flow, the commercial space industry will continue to accelerate beyond satellite constellations to sub-orbital tourism, life-extending medical research, and eventually manufacturing in low-Earth and even cislunar orbits. But markets require certainty, and NASA's ongoing endeavors are the necessary foundation upon which the commercial space sector will continue to thrive.

That is why the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is working across the country to engage industry and individual alike to highlight the criticality of fully funding this new era of human space exploration. When America sets its sights upward, we all benefit.

—Christian Zur, Executive Director, Procurement Policy, U.S. Chamber of Commerce