

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INVESTMENT SYMPOSIUM (E6)
Attracting Private Investment (2)

Author: Mr. Charles Lauer
Rocketplane Global, Inc., United States

Mr. George French
Rocketplane Global, Inc., United States

Mr. David Faulkner
Rocketplane Global, Inc., United States

Ms. Misuzu Onuki
Space Frontier Foundation, Japan

SPACEPORT DEVELOPMENT SYNERGIES WITH TERRESTRIAL MASS-MARKET SPACE
THEMED TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Abstract

Commercial suborbital spaceport developments are now popping up in many locations in the US as well in other locations all over the world. The FAA / AST office now has seven licensed spaceports in the US and is tracking or actively working on about a dozen additional spaceport locations. In the last year additional spaceport development projects have been discussed in Singapore, Sweden, Spain, Japan, and the United Arab Emirates.

The most recent licenses in the US were approved in Oklahoma and New Mexico. The Oklahoma Spaceport is in a sparsely populated area about 100 miles west of Oklahoma City on a former Air Force base. Spaceport America in New Mexico is in an even more remote location with essentially no existing infrastructure and no population. However, part of the business model – especially for New Mexico where the state taxpayers are spending 200million to develop all new spaceport infrastructure – is that terrestrial tourism and visitor traffic.

An entirely different business case can be made for the development of commercial spaceports in conjunction with major new space-themed tourist attractions in locations that already have significant tourist visitor traffic. In the US, the proposed spaceport in Hawaii can draw from over 7 million visitors per year and superb year-round flying weather. In Florida, spaceport projects in Jacksonville and Miami have existing visitor traffic of over 10 million people per year. Barcelona and Singapore have even larger annual visitor traffic volumes.

In these locations the economic synergies between the development of an actual working spaceport with a small volume of high income customers and the development of new state-of-the-art virtual reality space theme rides and attractions for the mass market customers are very strong. A significant percentage of the total spaceport revenue stream can thus be obtained from the broader mass market and the overall business case for the spaceport development is thereby made much stronger. This paper will examine several case studies of this new synergistic combined business model, both domestic and international.