

BUSINESS INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM (E6)
New Space Markets + Investment Opportunities (3)

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SPACEPORT FLORIDA / JACKSONVILLE AS A CASE STUDY FOR 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 eight licensed spaceports in the US and is tracking or actively working on several additional spaceports. In the last year additional spaceport developments have been discussed in Singapore, Sweden, Spain, Japan, and the UAE.

The most recent license approved in the US is in Jacksonville Florida at a former Naval Air Station. This is the first licensed spaceport that is actually located in a major metropolitan area with a substantial existing tourist industry. Previously, spaceports were approved in Oklahoma and New Mexico. The Oklahoma Spaceport is in a sparsely populated area about 100 miles west of Oklahoma City. Spaceport America in New Mexico is in an even more remote location with no existing infrastructure or population. In any conventional tourism destination demand analysis the number of visitors that may be expected at these locations would be small, and it would be difficult to make the business case for any significant investment in tourism infrastructure.

A much stronger 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 terrestrial tourist visitor traffic. In the US, the proposed spaceport in Hawaii can draw from over 7 million annual visitors. 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. The prototype design program and business case for Spaceport Florida / Jacksonville will be reviewed in detail as the model for the other spaceport developments in major tourist destinations around the world. This project is expected to begin construction in 2011 and be open for business in 2012 at about the same time that licensed commercial spaceflights begin in the US.