

# Why space matters

## Boeing is in a coalition that's promoting public support for exploration

By Ed MEMI

Many people have a basic understanding of the U.S. space exploration program. But they often fall short in understanding how space affects their lives.

Boeing and a number of companies in the human spaceflight business saw a need to promote the United States' Vision for Space Exploration, announced in 2004. To do this, they formed the Coalition for Space Exploration to better educate the public and Congress about its relevance.

The Vision for Space Exploration is an ambitious program of discovery using human and robotic systems to complete the International Space Station and return to the moon and someday head to Mars and other distant planets.

The vision recognizes that a vibrant space program will increase human knowledge of the universe, advance science and engineering, and stimulate the U.S. education system. In addition, the vision realizes that space achievements establish technological innovation and space leadership, generate technologies for Earth, inspire students to learn, and strengthen the U.S. economy and overall security.

The coalition comprises two complementary groups. The public affairs team directs and develops public outreach activities, such as advertising, editorial support, research, reports and public appearances. The government affairs team—made up of 55 companies, asso-

ciations and aerospace unions—actively tracks the progress of space-exploration policy, and assists with messages and audiences for the public outreach effort. The team has been active in briefing members of Congress about the vision.

“Congress has endorsed the Vision for Space Exploration as the law of the land. But the competition for budget resources is fierce, and there are no guarantees America's space exploration program will stay on track over the long haul,” said Joe Mayer, chairman of the coalition's public affairs team and business development manager for Boeing Space Exploration in Houston.

Coordinating these efforts is made easier by the fact that both teams are led by Boeing managers. Brian Wagner of Boeing's Washington, D.C., Operations is co-chair of the Coalition's government affairs team and joins Mayer in support of the vision.

A recent initiative of the coalition has been to sponsor NASA Means Business. This program lets college students in marketing, advertising and media produce a communications plan that will inform and inspire the public to support the U.S. space program. The coalition also has placed a number of advertisements and conducted several polls to gauge public support. The polls show strong support of the vision.

For more information about the coalition, visit [www.spacecoalition.com](http://www.spacecoalition.com). ■

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### Be a Space Advocate!

Gallup polls consistently show strong public support for the U.S. space program, including plans to return humans to the moon and venture on to Mars. Unfortunately, few ever voice their support to their elected representatives in Congress.

The Web site [www.spaceadvocate.com](http://www.spaceadvocate.com) provides a way for Americans to let their elected officials know how much they support U.S. space exploration plans.

“Spaceadvocate.com makes it easy for the common citizen to identify their congressman and senators and provides a ready way to send an e-mail to those elected officials expressing support for space exploration,” said Joe Mayer. He's chairman of the Coalition for Space Exploration public affairs team and business development manager for Boeing Space Exploration in Houston.

A student from Rice University signs up for [spaceadvocate.com](http://spaceadvocate.com) while Coalition for Space Exploration members Jackie Hutto (middle) and Deanna Wilke look on during the Space Exploration conference in Houston last December. Boeing is a member of the Coalition for Space Exploration, which helps promote the Vision for Space Exploration.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE COALITION FOR SPACE EXPLORATION

