

NASA awards aerospace companies

Four companies are designing shuttle replacement

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VIERA, Fla. (WOFL FOX 35) - **NASA** took another step towards finding the spacecraft to replace the soon-to-be-retired space shuttle program.

The American space agency announced the winners of its \$270 million spacecraft commercial crew development program. Washington State's **Blue Origin** received \$22 million for its new Shepard spacecraft, while Colorado's **Sierra Nevada Corp.** got \$80 million to continue developing its seven passenger winged Dream Chaser.

California's **Boeing Company** was the big money winner with \$92.3 million awarded for its CST-100 capsule. California's **Space X** was awarded \$75 million.

Although the four winning aerospace companies are designing four different spacecraft to send Americans into low earth orbit, **Florida Institute of Technology** space consultant Tim Franta says NASA needs to spur a variety of spacecraft developers.

"We have to have multiple sources," says Franta, referring to the US's lack of any spacecraft after the shuttle retires. "We have to have competitions, we have to have redundancy."

NASA says they expect the first spacecraft to be available around 2015. After the shuttle retires this summer, astronauts will ride the Russian Soyuz vehicles into orbit until the American alternative is available.

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