

SPACE TOURISM WITH THE PRICE TAG OF \$1.5 BILLION



Plans for a space tourism programme, which is being headed by two former NASA executives, intend to sell manned lunar flights within the coming decade. According to Golden Spike, the \$1.5 billion cost is the same for programmes that are being funded by the government to take robots into outer space.

Golden Spike Company's two entrepreneurs are Gerry Griffin, who was formerly an Apollo flight director of the NASA Johnson Space Center, as well as Alan Stern, who is a planetary and formerly a NASA science chief. The company's advisers include high profile politicians like Newt Gingrich, the former US House of Reps speaker, and also Bill Richardson, who is a former governor of New Mexico and high official of the Bill Clinton government.

Golden Spike Company's name is inspired by the spike that finished the construction of the first rail way to cross the United States. The company's goal is to take part in the new era of private space flight, and initiate a new movement to encourage humans back into space.

In 2011, NASA withdrew its space shuttles to cut down on costs. The space agency has also ordered Russian spacecraft to move supplies and people to the International Space Station. In recent years, transportation was constructed on spacecraft and controlled by Space X which only carries cargo. Manned flights are being suspended as a result of a dwindling budget, and instead NASA is depending on robots to undertake the task of space exploration.

As such, space flight is set to be open to commercialization, and private companies are starting to launch their rockets into orbit. **Costing \$1.5 billion for a round lunar trip**, Golden Spike asserts that it will decrease costs by using existing rockets and new spacecraft with commercial crew.

The company seeks to offer space flights to individuals, businesses and nations that have interests in lunar exploration, with the expected prices being only a proportion of any past lunar programme.

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