

America's Leaders

Helping American Industry Fly High

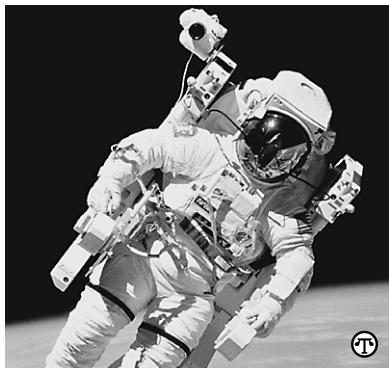
(NAPSA)—Space travel could be commercially viable sooner than some people might think. That's because a new initiative could make the price of leaving the planet less out of this world and help give more people access to space than ever before.

NASA's Space Launch Initiative (SLI) is a five year, \$4.8 billion program to develop a next generation reusable launch vehicle (RLV). The RLV is meant to dramatically lower the cost of reaching space, while substantially increasing safety and reliability.

The ultimate goal will be to achieve a vehicle that is ten times more reliable, with crew survivability 100 times greater, and at a cost ten times less than today's launch vehicles. NASA recently contracted with Boeing to study technology concepts that can help them achieve these objectives.

Under Phase I of the contract, Boeing Phantom Works will study airframe, vehicle subsystems, operations and propulsion concepts that could lead to a series of cutting-edge alternative technologies. What they learn could eventually be applied to RLV design.

Elsewhere at Boeing, their Rocketdyne unit is developing an advanced reusable rocket engine that will boost safety and reliability for future flight crews. New



A new initiative may make space travel safer, less expensive and eventually, commercially viable.

leap-ahead technologies will include crew survival-systems, advanced tank and airframe structures, advanced propulsion and thermal protection systems.

"Our team is anxious to participate in this new era of space exploration," says Robert Schwanz, Boeing Space Launch Initiative project manager. "We've worked hard at developing a strategy to achieve NASA's goals. Now the wheels are in motion."

Schwanz expects the program to set forth what he calls "a new precedent for all space travel." That could mean the sky would no longer be the limit for a number of American industries.