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For immediate release

SwRI and XCOR agree to pioneering research test flight missions

Boulder, Colo. — Feb. 27, 2012 — Southwest Research Institute® (SwRI®) has reached an agreement with XCOR Aerospace, Inc. to conduct pioneering suborbital space missions with Institute payload specialist astronauts flying aboard one or two test missions in the XCOR Aerospace Lynx Mark I vehicle. The flights will test capabilities of the Lynx vehicle with actual researchers and research experiments aboard.

In 2011, SwRI and XCOR Aerospace inked a deal for six SwRI suborbital flights aboard Lynx, with options for three more. Today's announcement moves the first such flights ahead of XCOR's commercial services to be a part of XCOR's Lynx test flight program.

"We are very excited to advance the capability to do suborbital research with Lynx by becoming a part of the planned test flight program for this innovative and highly capable new human spaceflight vehicle," says Dr. Alan Stern, SwRI Space Science and Engineering Division's Associate Vice President, who leads the project.

Andrew Nelson, XCOR's chief operating officer, adds that "XCOR is as serious about our research missions as other parts of our Lynx flight manifest, and this effort will help us validate flight procedures using trained test engineers not involved in early operations, much as we did with our X-Racer rocket-powered aircraft program. We're proud to announce our intention to team with SwRI in adding these research test missions to our comprehensive flight test program."

Stern and project co-investigators Dr. Daniel Durda and Dr. Cathy Olkin have

been training for suborbital spaceflight aboard zero-G aircraft, centrifuges and F-104 jet fighters since 2010. All three researchers are expected to fly and operate suborbital experiments during the six-mission flight sequence under the SwRI and XCOR contract.

“By putting scientists in space with their experiments, researchers can achieve better results at lower cost, and with a higher probability of success, than with many old-style automated experiments,” Stern adds. “The effort we’re announcing today with XCOR will put SwRI researchers at the leading edge of this revolutionary new kind of suborbital research.”

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For more information about XCOR Aerospace, see www.xcor.com.