

Re: Space Access Update #112 9/19/05

Source: <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.space.policy/2005-10/msg01144.html>

- *From:* "Len" <len@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 29 Oct 2005 08:08:41 -0700
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Dr John Stockton wrote:

> JRS: In article <ti92m1t86lp51j6pvnsdpoek1cb38pgv08@xxxxxxx>, dated
> Thu, 27 Oct 2005 19:39:14, seen in news:sci.space.policy, Monte Davis
> <monte.davis@xxxxxxxxxxx> posted :
>>
>>Without such a loan, though, the challenge is to find an economically
>>viable path *from* where we are today *to* the promised land of CATS.
>>It's a tough challenge that's almost certainly going to require a long
>>series of incremental nibbles at the problem from technology AND
>>politics AND alt.space entrepreneurial economics... not a "silver
>>bullet" breakthrough from any one angle.
>
> That is why it is wrong to concentrate on designing (which in this field
> means "not very expensive") to do cheaply such as : orbit loads of
> tourists; supply ISS; launch satellites; launch interplanetary vehicles
> or components.
>
> Instead, the aim should be primarily, by showing the design, to get
> enough money to develop, build, and launch it, and secondarily that its
> success should advance the cause of affordable access in some way or
> another. If the first is achieved, the second is near-inevitable.

While I generally agree that the main path should be going for the money, one should not dismiss easily the importance of conceptual design early in the game. This is true for two reasons: 1) A good design may--not always--help get the money; 2) Once serious money starts to be spent, then all opportunity for thinking on the conceptual level is gone; all effort then goes into detail design of the existing concept, right or wrong.

This is one of the things that has gone so wrong with procurement. There used to be far more opportunity for relatively free-structured exploratory study. Now the emphasis is on total package