

[Register](#)
[Login](#)

SEN

[SEARCH](#)

[Home](#)
[News](#)
[Solar System](#)
[Universe](#)
[Space Exploration](#)
[Spaceflight](#)
[Government & Business](#)
[Science / Tech](#)
[Astronomy](#)
[Video](#)
[Latest Videos](#) [Video Archive](#)

[Sen](#)
[About Sen](#) [Terms and conditions](#) [Advertising](#) [Privacy policy](#) [Charles Black](#) [Editorial](#) [Contact](#)



Moon Express to fly lunar telescope



An image from Japan's Kaguya probe shows earthrise over the Moon. Credit: JAXA/NHK

(Sen) - Moon Express, one of the leading private companies competing to fly to our natural satellite, is supporting plans to plant a telescope in the lunar soil.

The firm is backing the International Lunar Observatory Association (ILOA), which wants to operate an astronomical observatory that would take images of the stars and Earth in pristine conditions, free of any atmospheric turbulence.

The telescope - brainchild of US businessman and educator Steve Durst - would broadcast its images back home to support the worldwide Galaxy Forum 21st Century Education program.

Moon Express, led by energetic CEO Dr Bob Richards, is one of a field of entrants competing for a cosmic version of an Olympic event - a race to land on the Moon and win the Google Lunar X PRIZE (GLXP).

Part of their design is to fly a shoebox-sized test telescope, called ILO-X, to the Moon's South Pole region. There it will use cutting edge optical and imaging technology to take inspiring photos of objects within our Milky Way and beyond.

We're thrilled to be part of the ILO team reaching for the Moon
Dr Bob Richards, CEO of Moon Express

Last week, a demonstration of ILO-X, the International Lunar Observatory's precursor instrument, was conducted by ILOA and Moon Express on the summit of Mauna Kea in Hawaii, an event hosted by the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope.

ILOA and Moon Express are establishing a Joint Venture Agreement for the mission being planned. Richards said: "We're thrilled to be part of the ILO team reaching for the Moon."

Durst said: "The primary goal of the International Lunar Observatory is to expand human understanding of the Galaxy and Cosmos through observation from our Moon. We are very encouraged by our Global Demonstration and are excited about sending the ILO-X to the Moon."



An artist's impression of the lander sitting on the Moon. Credit: Moon Express

Moon Express, which is already generating revenue from supplying data to NASA, is aiming to send its first robotic lander to the Moon in late 2014. It will be launched atop either SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket or another commercial launch vehicle.

Last month, Richards told Sen: "Moon Express is a commercial lunar exploration company that applauds but is not dependent on the Google Lunar X PRIZE or any single customer in its business model. Our short term goal is to have growing profitable operations as a payload and data delivery service, with a longer term goal of exploring the Moon from an entrepreneurial perspective for planetary resources of value to Earth and our future in space."

NASA is working in partnership with Moon Express and other businesses for "Moon 2.0", a new generation of lunar exploration being planned by private companies as well as space agencies. NASA's Innovative Lunar Demonstrations Data (ILDD) program enables the space agency to buy data from commercial operations to help develop its own technology.

Highlights

Commercial space company Moon Express plans to fly a telescope to the lunar surface.

The company is working with the International Lunar Observatory Association to establish a telescope that can observe the sky and Earth for educational ends

Tests of a prototype for Moon Express's ILO-X prototype have been carried out on the summit of Mauna Kea in Hawaii, a major location for major international observatories

Related Links

[Moon Express website](#)

[Google Lunar X PRIZE](#)

[Moon Express on Twitter](#)

[International Lunar Observatory](#)

[Commercial Moon explorer takes next giant leap](#)

[Moon 2.0](#)

Most Popular



[Curiosity less than a month from Mars](#)



[Mars marvel Opportunity completes 3,000 martian sols](#)



[Cassini spots runaway landslides on Iapetus](#)

Advertisements