

FORMER MISSION CONTROL MEMBER ENTERS SUP MARKET

Aeronautical scientist invents fall-proof stand up paddle board

HOUSTON, TEXAS, USA, December 28, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An innovative new stand-up paddle (SUP) board manufacturer is set to enter the global SUP market with a personal watercraft born out of the aerospace realm. Christopher Leslie, a former NASA Mission Control team member based at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas has invented a stable SUP board by transferring spacecraft center of gravity concepts to the watersport.



The Lightcraft L5 is ready to enter the SUP market

“Outside of Mission Control, I was working on a research and development project related to auto-determination of center of gravity for spacecraft, which was going to be important for future lander vehicles to stabilize themselves as they lift off of other planetary and lunar bodies” explains Leslie.

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Christopher Leslie

After multiple patents for his work was awarded, a family vacation where Leslie tried stand up paddling became the gateway for a new future. “I was horrible at paddle boarding” recalls Leslie. “I couldn’t stand up for more than just a few minutes before I became unstable and tumbled into the Pensacola Bay water. I remember thinking about the flaws I saw in that basic design of an SUP...that long oval shape is not really designed for stability, it simply evolved from a surfboard, and no one had thought to

optimize it. I had an idea for a new design based on my work at the space center, so I went back to shore, grabbed a napkin from a local snow cone stand and begin drawing.” recalls Leslie.

Leslie’s drawings became a new SUP in the shape of a catamaran. “The center of gravity on a regular SUP is a long thin line that runs down the center. If your center of gravity (near your

chest) moves to the left or right of that board line, then you yourself become unstable...similar to sitting on a stationary bicycle. So, I split that line into two pontoons. That simple enhancement creates a large area of stability which enables anyone to stand still without the worry of falling” states Leslie.

After building a prototype in his garage out of foam and fiberglass, the [Leslie Lightcraft Company](#) was formed in late 2017. Leslie gathered a management team comprised of former CEOs, executives and business owners, then secured the needed investments. After multiple iterations of the design utilizing various manufacturing approaches, the Lightcraft team has landed on a version for the mass market in 2022, this version, they call the “L5”.

“One very nice discovery we found, was that populations who may not have had the opportunity to utilize a regular SUP because of the instability, could now get out on the water. We’ve had individuals in their 70s, individuals with rheumatoid arthritis and knee replacements get out and explore. One of the happier discoveries was the reaction from those folks...they would often stop and cry just out there on the water and then get hugs back at the dock from their families. That was a wonderful thing to see come out of a bunch of buoyancy formulas.” explains Leslie.

[Exactly how stable is the L5?](#) “To date, the only person to fall off has been my wife”, explains Leslie. “We were doing a photoshoot at a local marina here in Houston and she was so comfortable on it, she forgot she was standing on the water and proceeded to simply step off...in her cocktail dress...I’m still hearing about that.” laughs Leslie.

Built entirely in the United States (Lafayette, Louisiana), this new spaceship-looking watercraft is poised to launch into the national and global markets. The Lightcrafts are eleven feet long, three feet wide and one foot deep. Lightcrafts can carry up to 500 pounds and still remain stable. The L5 has dry-storage areas and stainless-steel cleats to tie it to any dock.

The Leslie Lightcraft Co is now looking for nation-wide distributors and local dealers. While the L5 is designed with the family in mind, other uses are for resorts, rentals, SCUBA diving platforms, eco-tours, and SUP yoga. “Everything is in place, the tests are all done, the manufacturing process is understood, the supply chain is in place, all that’s missing is the sales, so that’s out new focus. This is a far distance away from Mission Control, but just as exciting I think”, says Leslie.

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