

# Aviation Week by Informa Announces Finalists for the Inaugural Space Tech Challenge Awards at Space Tech Expo USA

*The space industry is set to celebrate groundbreaking innovation at the inaugural awards taking place on June 3 in Anaheim, Calif.*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, April 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The space industry is set to celebrate

groundbreaking innovation at the inaugural Aviation Week [Space Tech Challenge Awards](#) taking place on June 3 in partnership with Space Tech Expo USA, June 3-4 in Anaheim, Calif.



This landmark event underscores Aviation Week's commitment to advancing space exploration and technology, connecting execution-ready innovations with the government agencies, prime contractors, and commercial operators actively seeking them.



The Aviation Week Space Tech Challenge Awards showcase the ingenuity and determination of innovators who are shaping the future of space technology."

*Greg Hamilton, President, Aviation Week by Informa*

From lunar operations to Mars missions, the space industry faces nearly 200 validated capability gaps. The Aviation Week Space Tech Challenge Awards recognize solutions already in development — prototypes tested and advancing toward deployment — that address these critical challenges.

"The Aviation Week Space Tech Challenge Awards showcase the ingenuity and determination of innovators who are shaping the future of space technology," said Greg Hamilton, President of [Aviation Week by Informa](#). "We are proud to celebrate these groundbreaking solutions that address critical capability gaps and enable the rapid growth of the space economy."

## Recognizing Excellence in Space Innovation

This year's finalists represent a diverse group of innovators, from aerospace companies and startups to universities and cross-industry pioneers. Their solutions demonstrate clear evidence of progress, market validation, and readiness for implementation.

## The Finalists

### Colonization – Sustainable Human Presence Beyond Earth

- Accurate Atom Inc. — Modular Electrocatalytic ISRU System
- Lead Tech S.r.l. — ExtrEMo (Extraterrestrial Expandable Module)
- Skyports — LUNGS (Lunar Glass Structures)

### Industrialization – Space Resource Utilization & Manufacturing

- Albany Engineered Composites — Near Net Shape Carbon-Carbon
- Trillion Quality Systems — Optical 3D Digital Image Correlation
- Varda Space Industries — W-Series Reentry Capsule

### Protection & Defense – Security & Situational Awareness

- Array Labs — Distributed Cooperative Radar Satellite Constellation
- Connectical – LiteGuard — Ultra-Lightweight EMI/RFI Shielding Braid
- ThinkOrbital, Inc. — ThinkX (Space-Based X-Ray Satellite Inspection)

### Commercialization – New Space Economy Infrastructure

- Blueshift — AeroZero Tapes
- Flexell Space Corp — CIGS-Perovskite Flexible Space Solar Cells
- Northrop Grumman — Enhanced Commercial Cygnus Spacecraft

### University Programs

- Arizona State University — Nanobubble Gas Transfer Technology
- LASSENA École de technologie supérieure — SAFARI
- Rajiv Gandhi National Aviation University — Cislunar Integrated Utility Node
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign — LEAP

## Advancing Space Innovation

The Aviation Week Space Tech Challenge Awards are designed to accelerate the deployment of solutions addressing NASA-identified capability gaps. These include innovations in lunar operations, autonomous systems, resource utilization, communications, and space safety.

Applicants were evaluated by a distinguished panel of industry leaders, including representatives from Lockheed Martin, Aerospace Corp., ispace Technologies, and the World Innovation Network (WIN).

## ABOUT AVIATION WEEK BY INFORMA

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