Happenings in this world and beyond…

THE STELLARXPRESS

OCTOBER 2026

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NATIONAL SPACE DESIGN COMPETITION

FINAL REMINDER TO REGISTER A TEAM! THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER IS OCTOBER 14TH!

Are your students ready to think like aerospace engineers, mission planners, and space innovators?

The registration deadline is quickly approaching for the upcoming **StellarXplorers Space Design Competition**, the nation's premier space-focused STEM competition for high school and middle school students!

As a reminder, there is no limit to the number of teams participating at each school/organiation, as long as there is one adult team director for every five teams.

Don't miss your chance to participate! Register your team today and empower the next generation of space explorers, engineers, and innovators.

Schedule / Cost: www.stellarxplorers.org/dates-fees.

Map of registered teams, visit: www.stellarxplorers.org/registered-teams.

If you are new and wish to review the Team Director orientation that was held earlier this month, visit: www.stellarxplorers.org/tdorientation.html

The countdown is winding down! Sign up before the October 14 deadline!

STELLARCAMPS

Build Aerospace Skills Year-Round with StellarCamps

The StellarCamps curriculum is available year-round and can be purchased for a one-time fee of just $99. Designed to spark interest in aerospace and develop the foundational knowledge needed for success in StellarXplorers, StellarCamps offers flexible learning options that fit a variety of settings. Whether used with a classroom, club, or homeschool group, or completed independently as a self-paced course, StellarCamps provides an engaging and accessible introduction to space systems, mission design, and aerospace careers.

Visit www.stellarxplorers.org/stellarcamps to learn more and get started today.

SPONSOR NEWS

L3Harris Technologies has continued its outstanding support of AFA's StellarXplorers Space STEM Program for the ninth consecutive year with a $50,000 donation!

L3Harris presented the check to AFA President & CEO Lt. Gen. Burt Field, USAF (Ret.) at AFA's 2026 Air, Space & Cyber Conference in National Harbor, Md. The contribution from L3Harris will allow StellarXplorers to promote STEM education opportunities to a wider network of students across the county and encourage the next generation of the space workforce.

"L3Harris continues to play a vital role in helping us inspire and prepare the future space workforce," said Rebecca Dalton, StellarXplorers Director of Operations. "Their generous support enables us to provide students with engaging, hands-on learning experiences that bring space and STEM concepts to life. As a result, we're seeing students develop greater confidence, curiosity, and enthusiasm for pursuing careers in the space industry."

L3Harris' support is an investment not only in the StellarXplorers program, but also in the students who will shape the future of the aerospace and technology industries. By helping students develop technical knowledge, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, partnerships like this are what help prepare the next generation to take on the challenges of tomorrow.

Thank you, L3Harris. Together, we can continue creating opportunities for students to reach higher, think bigger, and explore the possibilities of a future among the stars.

Want to read more? Check out the full AFA article, featuring a video of the check presentation.

Source: https://www.afa.org/l3harris-supports-stellarxplorers-with-50000-to-reach-more-students-nationwide/

STEM RESOURCES

AFA is proud to offer the AFA Educator Grants program to support K-12 classroom projects focused on STEM and aerospace

When teachers or instructors propose innovative, aerospace-themed projects, they unleash their students' imaginations and encourage bright minds to explore futures in STEM fields. Unfortunately, sometimes a lack of funding prevents these projects from becoming a reality. AFA is proud to step in and offer three types of education grants to make sure those dreams become reality.

Educator Grants:

Every year, AFA awards $20,000 in grants to 40 educators poised to make a lasting difference. The grant process is competitive. A committee of aerospace education experts reviews all qualified applications and scores them based on their detailed grant proposals. AFA selects projects that best serve our nation's students and support our mission. *AFA Educator Grant applications are accepted from September 1 through December 15 and grants are awarded in February.*

CAP Grants:

AFA is proud to offer $250 grants to Civil Air Patrol (CAP) units to advance aerospace education and STEM initiatives for cadets and in outreach initiatives. AFA's grant support to CAP units helps inspire interest in youth across the nation toward science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) subjects and careers. *Grants are issued twice a year. Deadlines are June 30 and December 31 each year.*

JROTC Grants:

AFA offers grants of $500 to JROTC units to advance aerospace education in the classroom. These grants enhance students' understanding of the critical role aerospace plays in today and tomorrow's society. AFA is proud to partner with JROTC to operate aerospace education programs in 30 classrooms to reach hundreds of cadets annually.

For more information on how to apply, visit AFA Education for Grants.

Join the StellarXplorers Alumni Network

This is a private group for past and present StellarXplorers participants. You must be at least 16 years of age to join, according to LinkedIn account regulations. All requests to join will be reviewed by StellarXplorers staff to verify participation in the program.

To join, visit: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12721859/

SPACE NEWS

Curious About What's Happening Overhead?

Check out the Space.com Space Calendar to stay up to date with upcoming planned rocket launches and skywatching-worthy dates. And in case you missed it…

02 OCT 2026 | Earth's hidden daytime auroras revealed from space

01 OCT 2026 | SpaceX just launched the 1st US astronaut mission to embrace the 'unlucky' number 13

25 SEP 2026 | Hubble Space Telescope finishes 200,000 Earth orbits in style

19 SEP 2026 | Rocket Lab launches an Earth-observing radar satellite from New Zealand (video)

08 SEP 2026 | Astrophotographer captures jaw-dropping view of the Crescent Nebula

Space Photos:

Image captured on Aug. 2, 2026, by the UVI instrument on SMILE shows a full ring of the northern lights around the north pole in ultraviolet light.
(Image credit: ESA & CAS/Smile/UVI)

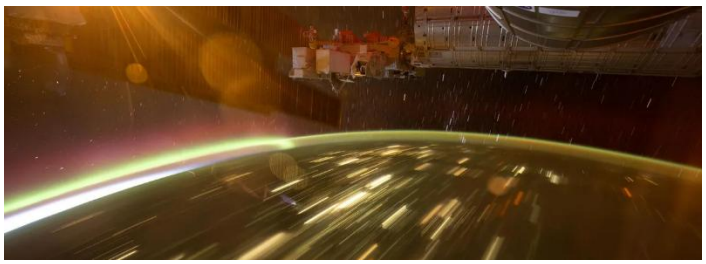

Image captured on Aug. 2, 2026, by the UVI instrument on SMILE shows a full ring of the northern lights around the north pole in ultraviolet light.
(Image credit: ESA & CAS/Smile/UVI)

JUST FOR FUN

Your lost dog can now call home with the world's 1st satellite-connected dog collar

The Fi-Ultra dog collar combines a GPS receiver, which determines the dog's position in real time, and a simple battery-powered modem that connects to T-Mobile's cellular network via SpaceX's Starlink system. When the dog's position registers outside a pre-defined zone, the owner receives a message via a smartphone app.

When no cell tower is within reach, the device links with an overflying Starlink satellite to complete the task. The dog owner can also set a geo fence around the dog, an area within which the dog is allowed to move without triggering an alert. When the dog crosses that virtual boundary, for example, escapes from the backyard, the tracker sends a message to the owner. Source:

GPS tracking has been around for decades. In the animal realm, wild, endangered animals became the first to wear them in the 1990s. The technology finally shrunk to small enough dimensions in the early 2010s when first GPS dog trackers entered the market.

Source: https://youtu.be/4V_zUxXYIos?si=K7t2paSm4BqG0e0L / space.com

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We would love to share some stories about your team. Send them our way: info@stellarxplorers.org.

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