



Buzz Aldrin Plans Spaceflight Raffle

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NEW YORK -- Former Apollo astronaut Buzz Aldrin is drawing up plans for a lottery-like contest, with space experiences for prizes, in hopes of making orbital spaceflight available to more than just wealthy entrepreneurs.

Billed as the ShareSpace Stakes, the contest is envisioned to function as part of Aldrin's ShareSpace Foundation, a firm designed to promote interest in human spaceflight and science education.

"It's something akin to a sweepstakes or a raffle," Aldrin said Tuesday during the Space Investment Summit here, adding that many details remain to be determined. "We have yet to set up the rules and regulations."

Aldrin said any entrants would have to be age 18 or older to enter the ShareSpace Stakes, and any winners would likely be required to satisfy the appropriate health requirements for spaceflight.

Currently, the only orbital flights available for space tourists are to the International Space Station, and are brokered with Russia's Federal Space Agency by the Virginia-based firm Space Adventures for a cost of between \$20 million and \$25 million. US entrepreneur Charles Simonyi, 58, is currently in the midst of such a flight aboard the space station as the outpost shifts between the Expedition 14 to Expedition 15 missions.

Aldrin, who made history on July 20, 1969 during NASA's Apollo 11 mission when he became the second human ever to set foot on the Moon, said some 400,000 people, each paying about \$50 a ticket, could cover the cost of an orbital tourist flight in one vision of the Stakes raffle. Other prizes could include weightless flights aboard Zero G aircraft or other experiences, he added.

"Our intent is to open the spaceflight experience," Aldrin said. "There's no question that space travel is poised to go from the few to the many."