

REMARKS FOR ADMINISTRATOR BOLDEN
PRESIDENT'S JOBS COUNCIL EVENT

Feb. 3, 2012

Thank you, Darlene (Miller) and thank you all for coming today. President Obama appreciates the important work being done here today by the Jobs Council, the Business Higher Education Forum (BHEF), and everyone here who is applying their collective talents and expertise to this important topic.

I also want to thank our commercial partner, the Boeing Company, for their participation and for showing us a little later today some of their work to help us innovate for the future. NASA is in the future business, after all. To create an American economy built to last, we have to educate our young people, and we have to make them passionate about learning and then support that enthusiasm.

At NASA, our missions have always inspired generations to pursue science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM, careers and today, that need is greater than ever.

President Obama has given us a charge to develop new capabilities, to reach higher, to venture farther into the solar system, and peer beyond it.

Our needs for workers across aerospace in the coming decades will be great. The space program is soaring to new heights, with new destinations on the horizon, and new workers needed to advance aviation and space technology.

As many of you know, we just closed our latest recruitment, for the astronaut class of 2013.

So kids can still dream of being an astronaut, or the scientist who develops the next mission to somewhere we've never been, or the mission controller who manages the terabytes of data we'll be analyzing for years to come from our scientific observatories.

The Business Higher Education Forum's work is helping schools and colleges prepare students with the skills they'll need for a wide range of careers, aligning higher education with workforce demands.

NASA is also working hard to provide hands-on experiences from grade school through college. Things like the student dust counter on *New Horizons* that is headed to Pluto, so college students can collect data on that long journey and be part of a real mission. There are others like CubeSats, which give students the opportunity to work with Nano satellites, and SPHERES, which enable them to program small satellites aboard the International Space Station. Finally there's MoonKAM on our *GRAIL* spacecraft, Ebb, which even now is enabling students to select targets for study on the moon.

We've kicked off a program to provide fellowships for graduate students to pursue studies in space technology. We're a key player in the White House's "Educate to Innovate" campaign through our *Summer of Innovation Program* that enhances middle school curricula with NASA resources and access to scientists and engineers. All told, NASA's K-12 STEM programs and initiatives reached more than a million students last year. We also reached more than 100 thousand educators across the education spectrum, and engaged more than 4000 students in internship opportunities.

We want to develop America's skills, for the next generation of innovators.

I was fortunate to have parents, both teachers, who really pushed me to work hard in school and complete my studies. Not everyone has such role models, but I know students want to learn. I know they're passionate about space. I've talked to them all around the world, and they want to make a difference. They know that a STEM career, on any of the many paths around which it might take shape, is a wonderful way to create a meaningful future that helps improve life on Earth and make new discoveries about our universe.

STEM studies are going to be advantageous for students at any level, even if they don't pursue a STEM career. We want all of our students to be literate in these topics even if they don't pursue a degree. We want students who take the route of community colleges or some other path to find a way to use STEM to enhance their careers, their earning power, and their ability to help us create and sustain the workforce of the future.

NASA has always partnered with a wide range of organizations from industry to academia and community groups to make the future happen. The Business Higher Education Forum and the Jobs Council also follow that model, and we're pleased to plug in NASA's vast network of educators and educational resources to help students get fired up about space and help launch their dreams.

Workers of all types are going to need that strong background in STEM to compete in the economy of today and tomorrow. An economy where hard work pays off and responsibility is rewarded – an economy built to last.

The president understands how important it is that we educate for the jobs of tomorrow and make sure every American has the same shot at a good job if they work hard and play by the rules.

Studying STEM will help everyone bolster their chances for that fair shot. I'm a prime example of someone used a strong STEM education to overcome the adversity of the segregated South, enter a challenging career of military aviation, and, as important, I took responsibility to put in the hard work to succeed. The President wants to foster this critical American value and today, we're here to help him promote that goal for our nation.

Thanks again to all of you for taking part in this event and for joining us in insuring that America has an economy built to last!