

ARIZONA SPACE BRIEFING



CONTRACTS · POLICY · SCIENCE · PEOPLE
BIWEEKLY, EVERY OTHER THURSDAY

ISSUE NO. 01 SEPT 24, 2026
THE FIRST EDITION

CONTRACTS / TUCSON

\$116M TO TUCSON IN ONE DAY.

On Sept 22, Raytheon won \$105.6M for AMRAAM missile parts and Sargent Aerospace & Defense won \$10.9M for Navy submarine valve repair.

SCIENCE

U of A to build two of Lazuli's three instruments

POLICY

The Space Commission's plan for the Legislature

COALITION

Blueprint Conversations 001, and what's next Dec 3

PHOENIX METRO
Space Commission plan due to the Legislature by year end

Casa Grande

TUCSON
\$116.5M in defense awards and the Lazuli instruments

ARIZONA BY THE NUMBERS

Arizona Space Blueprint, 2026

#1

in U.S. employment concentration for missile and space-vehicle manufacturing

1,200+

companies across Arizona's space sector

12,500+

projected new jobs

ISSUE 001 · SEPTEMBER 2026

THE NEXT CONNECTION ARIZONA NEEDS

What surfaced at Blueprint Conversations, funding dates to know, and a practical way to get involved.



BY ANGELICA SIROTIN · ISSUE 001 · SEPTEMBER 2026 · ABOUT 5 MINUTES

Welcome to the first Arizona Space Briefing. We're bringing together the developments, opportunities and people shaping the state's space economy, with a focus on what you can do next. This issue starts with a question from Blueprint Conversations: how do we make it easier for the organizations building here to find one another?

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BIG
THING

ARIZONA'S CAPABILITIES NEED CLEARER PATHS TO CUSTOMERS

At Blueprint Conversations 001 on Sep 22, 2026, at the University of Arizona in Scottsdale, the discussion returned to a familiar problem: a company can need a capability that already exists nearby and still struggle to find it. The report draws on university and industry perspectives, including those of Dr. Walter Harris of the University of Arizona Space Institute and Nicholas Busch of Radiall USA.

WHY IT MATTERS:

A testing facility is more useful when a company knows it is there. Research moves closer to commercialization when someone can identify a customer. A startup has a better chance of reaching a larger program when it knows the right supplier, prime contractor or program contact.

EVENT

BLUEPRINT CONVERSATIONS 001

DATE

SEP 22, 2026

VENUE

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, SCOTTSDALE

WHAT SURFACED:

Participants described gaps between university facilities and local companies, researchers and commercial customers, startups and prime contractors, and entrepreneurs and the people who can help them navigate funding and procurement.

UNIVERSITY FACILITIES**LOCAL COMPANIES****RESEARCHERS****COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS****STARTUPS****PRIME CONTRACTORS****ENTREPRENEURS****FUNDING & PROCUREMENT****FOUR GAPS NAMED AT BLUEPRINT CONVERSATIONS 001****THE PRACTICAL CHALLENGE:**

Knowing that a program or facility exists is only the first step. Companies also need to understand fit, requirements and who to contact.

THE RESPONSE:

The Arizona Space Economy Coalition is intended to help organizations see who is here, identify shared needs and build projects around the gaps. Its work connects academia, industry, government, investors and suppliers.

WHERE TO START:

**Tell us one capability
your organization
offers and one
connection that would
help you move forward.**

Those specifics give the community something useful to work with.

READ BLUEPRINT CONVERSATIONS 001: *[Approved public report link pending.]*

OPPORTU- NITIES

An approaching deadline, a federal funding window and two programs to watch. Review the linked requirements before preparing an application.

SEP 28

ARIZONA INNOVATION
CHALLENGE CLOSES

SEP-OCT

AMERICA MAKES CALLS
FORECAST

NOV 4

NSF SBIR/STTR DEADLINE

APR 20, 2027

SPACE CONGRESS 2027

DEADLINE · SEP 28, 2026

ARIZONA INNOVATION CHALLENGE

\$100,000

NON-DILUTIVE
FUNDING

Arizona Innovation Challenge — applications close Sep 28, 2026. The fall round focuses on software-as-a-service startups. Awardees receive \$100,000 in non-dilutive funding after completing required milestones. The published criteria include incorporation after August 2023, a working product used by real customers, and \$5,000–\$50,000 in monthly recurring revenue. Space software founders should check the full criteria.

REVIEW THE AIC REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION



FORECAST · SEP-OCT 2026

AMERICA MAKES

ADDITIVE MFG. QUALIFICATION · SEP

\$52M

AUTOMATED WELDING · OCT

\$35M

AI FOR MATERIAL ALLOWABLES · OCT

\$5.7M

America Makes — prepare for upcoming calls.

The current forecast lists a \$52 million additive manufacturing qualification call for September, followed in October by a \$5.7 million AI-for-material-allowables call and a \$35 million automated welding call. These are forecasts: the institute currently lists no active calls.

Manufacturers and research teams can use the topic list to identify potential collaborators while awaiting the formal requirements.

SEE THE AMERICA MAKES PROJECT-CALL FORECAST



KEY DEADLINE

NOV 4

NSF SBIR/STTR

NSF SBIR/STTR — Nov 4, 2026, is a key deadline for qualifying applicants. NSF permits certain holders of unused Project Pitch invitations and eligible Phase I awardees to submit under its published transition provisions. Check your invitation or award date against the official criteria; this is not an open deadline for every company.

REVIEW NSF'S ELIGIBILITY AND SOLICITATIONS →

ROLLING



ONE BAA, MANY APPENDICES

NASA SBIR/STTR

NASA SBIR/STTR — follow the individual appendices. NASA now releases Phase I topics through appendices to a Broad Agency Announcement. Each opportunity needs its own review of scope and timing. The BAA's overall validity period should not be treated as a blanket application deadline.

FOLLOW NASA'S 2026 INFORMATION HUB →

PARTNERSHIPS OPEN

SPACE CONGRESS 2027

Space Congress 2027 — partnerships are open for the gathering on Apr 20, 2027, at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Phoenix. Explore the partnership options or contact taryn@spacerising.org.

EXPLORE THE PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS →

APR 20 2027

SHARE Have an opportunity to share? Send the deadline, eligibility, link and a short description to angelica@spacerising.org.

AROUND THE STATE



Central and southern Arizona, with I-10 between the Phoenix metro and Tucson.

MESA

VIRGIN GALACTIC'S NEXT FLIGHT-TEST MILESTONE.

In its August business update, the company said it expects a captive-carry flight in October and its first new spaceship to enter commercial service in February 2027. For Arizona's aerospace community, this is a production and testing program to follow.

[READ VIRGIN GALACTIC'S UPDATE →](#)

TUCSON

MORE MANUFACTURING CAPACITY AT ALBERS AEROSPACE.

A 30,000-square-foot facility became operational in July, according to the Chamber of Southern Arizona. The expansion is expected to add 24 jobs over three years. Its capabilities include precision machining, fabrication and complex assemblies—the kind of supplier capacity the Blueprint conversation highlighted.

[READ THE EXPANSION ANNOUNCEMENT →](#)

OCT 2026

Captive-carry flight expected

VIRGIN GALACTIC

FEB 2027

First new spaceship in commercial service

VIRGIN GALACTIC

30,000 SQ FT

Facility operational since July

ALBERS AEROSPACE

24 JOBS

Expected over three years

ALBERS AEROSPACE

ONE COMMUNICATIONS TIP

MAKE YOUR CAPABILITIES EASY TO ACT ON.

Before a potential customer can make an introduction, they need to know what you do, who you do it for and why they should trust you.

A useful opening sentence follows this pattern:

“We help [customer] solve [problem] with [capability] .”

WHO WHAT HOW

Follow it with a result you can substantiate and one clear next step.

If your team has a milestone to share, Space Rising can help with a single communications project: an announcement, company feature, capability statement or LinkedIn content. Bring us what you’re working on and who you want to reach. Get in touch: angelica@spacerising.org.

COALITION

ADD YOUR ORGANIZATION’S SUPPORT.

The Arizona Space Economy Coalition is inviting organizations to become Founding Supporting Organizations. Signing expresses support for a coordinated statewide effort and interest in participating where opportunities fit your mission.

LEARN ABOUT THE COALITION AND PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS →

FOR A FUTURE MEMBER SPOTLIGHT, TELL US THREE THINGS:

- 1 What does your organization build or provide?
- 2 Where in Arizona do you work?
- 3 What connection would help you take the next step?

Send your answers to angelica@spacerising.org. We’ll follow up before publishing a profile.

ON THE CALENDAR

SEP **28** 2026

Arizona Innovation Challenge applications close.

NOV **4** 2026

NSF SBIR/STTR deadline for applicants covered by the published transition provisions.

APR **20** 2027

Space Congress 2027, Hyatt Regency, downtown Phoenix.

YOUR TURN

Which connection would make the biggest difference to your work right now: a research partner, a testing facility, a supplier, a customer or help finding the right funding program?

Email angelica@spacerising.org with one specific need. On LinkedIn, you can also leave it in the comments so others can respond.

JOIN THE ARIZONA SPACE ECONOMY COALITION. FORWARD THIS BRIEFING TO SOMEONE BUILDING IN ARIZONA.

[JOIN THE COALITION →](#)

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

001_Micro Blueprint_Space Coordination; [Arizona Commerce Authority](#); [America Makes](#); [NSF](#); [NASA](#); [Virgin Galactic](#); [Chamber of Southern Arizona](#); [Arizona Space Economy Coalition](#); [Space Congress](#).