

# Nova Scotia reaches for the stars

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[CBC News](#)

Cape Breton could become a launch pad for space shuttles, with the province giving land — and possibly money — to a company developing private space technology, Nova Scotia Business Inc. says.

NSBI spokesman Paul Doucet said the province is contributing 120 hectares of land to PlanetSpace, a partnership between an Ontario-based company and one in Chicago.

"This is, we believe, a credible opportunity," Doucet told CBC News on Wednesday.

"If you look at Kennedy Space Center in Florida, it actually turns more turnstiles than does Disney just down the road."

Doucet said PlanetSpace contacted the province's business development agency earlier in the year.

The company expects to carry 2,000 people on suborbital flights launched from somewhere in the United States in its first five years.

Under the plan, Cape Breton would serve as a launching pad to shuttle astronauts and supplies to the International Space Station.

PlanetSpace president Geoff Sheerin said the island is at the same latitude as a launch facility in Russia, which makes it a cheaper starting point for getting to the space station than the Kennedy Space Center.

"If you took the Russian space centre where a lot of the components were launched out of for the ISS and you put your finger on the globe and rotated it around, you end up hitting Cape Breton," Sheerin said.

"Basically, it's a fuel-saving issue."

## Could create thousands of jobs

Sheerin's company, Canadian Arrow, has been developing a rocket. His partner in PlanetSpace, Chirinjeev Kathuria, was involved with MirCorp, which sent the first privately funded mission carrying people to space, in 2000.

Kathuria said Cape Breton would certainly benefit from having a shuttle launch pad, adding it could create thousands of jobs and give a big boost to tourism.

"It would also give Canada the capability for a manned space program," Kathuria said.



The space shuttle Discovery launches from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida in July. A company hopes to develop a launch site in Cape Breton. (AP Photo/John Raoux)

**Launch site could be north of Sydney**

The two entrepreneurs said they're working on the designs and construction plans for the launch site and the space vehicles.

Kathuria said details of the \$200-million project will be announced before the end of the year. But he expects PlanetSpace to set up shop in Cape Breton in September and has set a target launch date for September 2009.

No specific site has been chosen yet, but PlanetSpace is looking at an area north of Sydney. Doucet said NSBI will show the company several areas of Crown-owned land.

Though Doucet is excited about the project, he said there's still a lot of work to do before a shuttle launch pad is built in Cape Breton.

"We're still in the early stages," Doucet said.