



September 10, 2008

## Mars settlement firm seeks tax break from Titusville

*BY JESSICA RAYNOR  
FLORIDA TODAY*

A company focused on researching and promoting a potential future Mars settlement could get tax breaks worth \$750,000 over seven years, in exchange for building a corporate headquarters and an educational facility in Titusville.

The company, 4Frontiers Corp. -- with a team of experts from around the world -- plans to spend about \$35 million building the dual projects on property at Interstate 95 at State Road 407 and near the Space Coast Regional Airport. The sites would have 35 employees.

The company's goal: to incubate space settlement ventures and focus on research, with the goal of reaching the reality of human settlement on Mars.

This project comes at an ideal time for the area: Several thousand people likely will lose their jobs when the space shuttle program ends in 2010.

"We believe in people going out into space," 4Frontiers Chief Executive Officer Mark Homnick said. "We believe in people going into space in a big way."

On Tuesday, the Titusville City Council voted unanimously to move forward with considering the tax-break plan, which would abate 70 percent of taxes over seven years. It will go to a public hearing next month.

"All I can say is: 'Wow,' " Titusville City Councilman Jim Tulley said. "This is about as exciting as anything I've seen the four years I've been on council."

In the 4Frontiers Corp. proposal for Titusville:

- A building that would house the new corporate headquarters for 4Frontiers, and would include a research-and-development facility, laboratories, prototype assembly area, light manufacturing, product-testing area and office support space.

This corporate headquarters would employ 10 people, with an average annual wage of \$47,500.

- NewSpace Center, which would be built simultaneously with 4Frontiers Corp. headquarters. It would include interactive displays and demonstration facilities for new commercial space technologies and hardware, and a science-based analog Mars settlement replica that is open to the public for paid admission.

The center, which would be built on property leased from the Titusville-Cocoa Airport Authority, also would contain research-and-development facilities for greenhouse and robotics technologies, and commercial and education-related simulation. The center would employ 25 people with an average annual salary of \$40,000.

Grants would help pay for construction and operation of both projects, company officials said.

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