

Space travel experts talk about trip to Mars

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WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Several space travel experts will discuss NASA's recent proposal to return to Mars during an upcoming Spring Space Forum at the West Lafayette campus of Purdue University on Friday (April 11).

Space travel experts Robert Zubrin, Joseph Palaia, Sigmar Wittig and Frank Bauer will speak about the possibility of returning to Mars and the potential research that can be done there. The event will be at 6 p.m. in Stewart Center's Fowler Hall. **The program is free and open to the public.**

"The Spring Space Forum is an educational, community-driven event geared toward generating interest in both students and the public on issues concerning space exploration," said Ian Meginnis, a member of Purdue Students for the Exploration and Development of Space, or SEDS, which is a sponsor for the event. "We're going to address questions such as, 'Should we go to Mars?' and 'What will we do when we get there?'"

During the discussion, people will be invited to participate and ask questions that pertain to the topic.

Zubrin is the president of the Mars Society and the author of several space-related books, including "The Case for Mars: The Plan to Settle the Red Planet and Why We Must," and "Entering Space: Creating a Spacefaring Civilization." He was also a key figure in pushing for the implementation of Mars Direct, a proposal intended to produce significant reductions in the complexity and costs associated with a mission to Mars.

Palaia is co-founder and vice president of operations of the 4Frontiers Corp., a private, space-commerce company focusing on the development of technologies required for orbital tourism, long-duration human habitation in space and extraterrestrial resource recovery.

Wittig, a former associate professor at Purdue from 1967-1976, served as the chair of the European Space Agency (ESA) Council from 2005-2007.

Wittig is the chairman emeritus of the executive board of the German Aerospace Center, the national research center for aviation and space flight in Germany.

Bauer received his bachelor's and master's degrees in aeronautics and astronautics from Purdue. He is the chief engineer for NASA's Exploration Systems Mission Directorate and is directly engaged in NASA's current initiative to return to the moon.

Along with SEDS, the School of Aeronautics and Astronautics, the Indiana Space Grant Consortium, and Purdue Engineering Student Council are sponsors for the event.

The School of Aeronautics and Astronautics has awarded degrees since 1943. Of the 22 graduates at

Purdue who have become astronauts, 14 earned degrees from the School of Aeronautics and Astronautics. The school's curriculum concentrates on the fundamental subject areas necessary to the research, development, design and operations of the aerospace industry.