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## New Company Launches With Aim of Colonizing Mars

By [Ker Than](#)  
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 posted: 08 September 2005  
 11:45 am ET

A new center that aims to be a cross between a museum and an amusement park may soon allow people to explore a Martian settlement without ever having to leave Earth.

The Martian research and outreach center will be operated by Four Frontiers, a new Florida-based space commerce company whose main objective is the establishment of a permanent human settlement on Mars.

"We see ourselves as the pioneers of the new space frontier," said Four Frontiers' CEO Mark Homnick. "We follow in the

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path made by the early explorers such as NASA and the ESA. We settle in the new land, we turn it into a home and add value.”

Four Frontiers is headed by many of the same people who helped establish the Mars Foundation, the non-profit organization who earlier this year presented detailed plans for a Martian settlement the group called the “[Homestead Project](#).”

But whereas the Homestead Project was narrowly focused on designing a settlement capable of sustaining a small group of initial Martian settlers, Four Frontiers will have a broader perspective, its member said.

“We want to establish the Mars settlement envisioned by the Mars Foundation because we view it as the essential element that will help open up the rest of the solar system,” said Joseph Palaia, the company’s Vice President of Operations. “But there is a wealth of opportunity beyond that that we are looking at.”

The company is named after the emerging inner-solar system economy that its members believe will soon develop, one that will be driven by the convergence of four frontiers: Earth, the Moon, Mars—including its two moons, Phobos and Deimos—and Asteroids.

“The beginnings of the solar system economy are happening as we speak,” Homnick told Space.com. “This is not something that’s fifty or one hundred years away, this is something that’s going to be happening in the next couple decades.”

Homnick said Four Frontiers’ focus will be primarily on the technology and design of the Martian settlement. The business of getting to Mars will be left to other companies which Four Frontiers will then partner up with.

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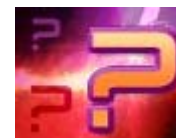
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The company's 5-year goals include the construction of a 25,000-square-foot replica of a Martian settlement here on Earth. Unlike similar projects aiming to simulate Martian conditions, Four Frontier's center will be located near a metropolitan areas and will be open to the public.

The center will serve as a source of revenue for the developing company as well as educate and inspire the public and garner support for the project.

"Folks won't just be on the outside, they'll be able to literally walk through a Martian settlement," Homnick said. "They'll be able to see it, touch it and understand that it's feasible with our current technology."

The company is currently scouting out locations for the center in Florida, Colorado and New Mexico and plans to make a final decision by the end of the year. The center is scheduled to open in mid-2007.

Four Frontiers will also have a research and development section that will focus on the production of core technologies necessary for Martian colonization, but which could also have uses in the other frontiers like the Moon and asteroids.

In addition to research and outreach, the company also plans to act as a consultant to manufacturers and government agencies who want to participate in the new inter-solar system economy.

The group believes a Martian settlement could be established as soon as 2025 if the cost of private launch vehicles continues to drop as predicted.

Homnick said Four Frontiers is currently looking to recruit a few enthusiastic individuals to join the company.



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"If you've got freedom in your heart, courage to face the unknown, and discipline to deliver, contact us, and perhaps we can realize our dreams together," he said.



For more information about the company, visit their website at <http://www.4frontiers.com>.

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