

## NEWS RELEASE

### **Regional Leadership Announces Results of Preliminary Study to Land *Dream Chaser*® Spacecraft at Huntsville International Airport**

Huntsville, Alabama (December 17, 2015) – Representatives from a coalition of community leadership, announced today the results of the first phase of a study to assess the feasibility of landing Sierra Nevada Corporation’s (SNC) *Dream Chaser*® spacecraft at Huntsville International Airport.

“Huntsville International Airport is pleased to report an initial phase of successful testing,” said Rick Tucker, Executive Director for Huntsville Madison County Airport Authority. “No airport related issues were discovered in this phase of testing that would prevent the Dream Chaser landing in Huntsville from becoming a reality. We are eager to move forward with our partners to keep Huntsville at the forefront of the space program.”

The preliminary study examined the compatibility of SNC’s Dream Chaser spacecraft with the existing runway and taxiway environments at Huntsville International Airport, a public use airport. One of the features of the Dream Chaser is the use of a front skid in place of a front wheel for landing, and in October, Morell Engineering of Athens, Alabama successfully conducted static and dynamic tests to determine whether the spacecraft’s deployed front skid plate could potentially cause damage to the asphalt runway. Results from the tests demonstrate that runway impacts would be negligible. In parallel to the skid tests, Reynolds, Smith and Hill (RS&H) of Jacksonville, Florida carried out airspace and sonic boom tests.

“We are very excited about the results from the initial phase of the study,” said Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle. “Our historic leadership in space combined with our great partnership with Sierra Nevada Corporation make Huntsville a logical choice to land the Dream Chaser, and we look forward to conducting additional studies.”

SNC’s Dream Chaser spacecraft is a multi-mission-capable space utility vehicle able to flexibly operate as an independent science platform, logistics enabler or orbital servicing vehicle. It is able to land on any runway that can accommodate a Boeing 737 or Airbus 320 class aircraft. The use of non-toxic propellants combined with an innovative concept of operations allows immediate access to payloads and crew upon landing. In addition, the Dream Chaser spacecraft can be easily transported from landing site to launch site using a variety of standard cargo aircraft.

“Landing the Dream Chaser at Huntsville International Airport would be an exciting next step for the Rocket City,” said Lucia Cape, senior vice president of economic development for the Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County. “In addition to having the required infrastructure for landing the vehicle, we have the expertise and assets for payload integration, operation and processing for Dream Chaser customers and we have great collaboration among our airport authority, elected officials and local businesses.”

The project team, which includes Huntsville City, Madison City, Madison County, the Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County, the Huntsville Airport Authority, and Teledyne Brown Engineering, will begin to secure funding to conduct additional studies in 2016 and submit an application for a commercial landing license to the Federal Aviation Administration.

If successful, The Huntsville International Airport would be the first commercial service airport to acquire the permission and ability to accommodate Dream Chaser spacecraft landings.

#### **OVERVIEW:**

The Huntsville International Airport Landing Site Study Phase 1 Results Overview can be viewed at [http://bit.ly/HSVspace\\_study](http://bit.ly/HSVspace_study).

#### **PHOTOS:**

Photos from the Skid Test can be downloaded at [http://bit.ly/HSVspace\\_study](http://bit.ly/HSVspace_study). Please give photo credit to: Juergen Beck, Freedom Light Productions.

Photo 1: Morell Engineering installing & testing thermocouple data collector & sensors

Photo 2: Skid tow vehicle during trial run for dynamic testing

Photo 3: Skid paths along runway after dynamic testing

Photo 4: Skid cooling on runway after final dynamic test

Photo 5: From L to R: Rick Rogers (RS&H), Taz Morell (Morell Engineering), Keith Kennedy (Hollis Kennedy House Movers), & Nicholas Kennedy (Hollis Kennedy House Movers) discussing observations during static tests.