

Center for Applied Space Technology

A Message from CAST Executive Director, Maria Peterson

The impending changes in our national space program manifested in the fly-out and retirement of the space shuttle system, invoke memories of another time (same place), and the wind-down of the Apollo/Saturn in the 1970s. Many of the engineers, technicians, and affiliated workforce contractors that built and flew the launch vehicles that took us to the moon and back were left without jobs, transferable skills, and often hope. What followed was a migration of space workers, their families, and their skills from Brevard and surrounding counties; many never to return.

Fortunately, there are key organizations within the county and the State of Florida that are anticipating the impending changes to the aerospace workforce and are taking measures to ensure that the greatest number possible of those skilled workers are retained within the local area. Without the articulation of a clear pathway forward for the national space program and the reduced workforce requirements for the rising commercial space industry (due in some measure because initial commercial flights will be unmanned with slightly less stringent requirements), space workers may be required to transition to other industries and activities. The Center for Applied Space Technology has corporate and personal memories of the demise of the Apollo program and will be working with all agencies and activities that are committed to minimizing the human toll from the imminent transition.

To that end, CAST has partnered with the one of the leading agencies anticipating and preparing for the changes that are coming, the Brevard Workforce (www.brevardworkforce.com). Our first effort in support of local workforce initiatives was the research, compilation, design, and publication of a web site designed to highlight transitional skills and opportunities for the aerospace workforce. The site targets both engineers and technicians and emphasizes available education and training opportunities that might enable a smoother transition. The career fields that comprise the web site include those available in the local area and the state; many are also considered to have high growth potential. The career transition information developed by CAST may be accessed at www.coolspacecareers.com. Our particular thanks to Marc Schwartz of Synergy Services for his work in ensuring that the site form was equal to its function.