



St. Cloud's mock space shuttle's road trip to Minnesota in June 2024. Inspiration Space Port plans a family space destination in St. Cloud featuring a full-scale shuttle, immersive attractions, STEM exhibits and more. (Photo: USA TODAY Network)

Year-round space shuttle center planned in St. Cloud

By Alice Mannette, USA TODAY Network via Reuters Connect//September 3, 2026//

The Blueprint

- [Inspiration Space Port](#) is planned as a year-round family destination in [St. Cloud](#).
- The attraction will feature [Shuttle Inspiration](#), a full-scale [space shuttle](#) mock-up.

- A 175-foot-tall dome will house interactive exhibits, simulators and space-themed attractions.
 - Plans include a [STEM](#)-focused traveling Shuttle Bus Ambassador for communities across [Minnesota](#).
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Inspiration Space Port, a family destination, is headed to St. Cloud.

Planning is underway for this year-round family destination that will bring Shuttle Inspiration, a full-scale space shuttle mock-up, to St. Cloud.

The shuttle will be housed inside a towering 300-foot-wide, 175-foot-tall dome wrapped in an LED exterior.

Inside, surrounding the massive spacecraft, visitors will journey through [space exploration](#) with cutting-edge technology, simulators, interactive attractions and cinematic storytelling designed to make them feel as though they have stepped off Earth toward worlds beyond.

At the heart of the ISP vision is a simple idea: Don't just show outer space to people. Bring them to it.

"There were earlier plans to simply put the shuttle on display, but it turns out we could do so much more with it," said Jason Bernick, founder of Inspiration Space Port, in a release. "We have a chance to create something really special here — something families will want to experience together and kids will never forget. I want this to become one of those places you simply have to see."

By bringing science, technology, engineering and mathematics to life through immersive, hands-on experiences, Inspiration Space Port is being designed to demonstrate STEM rather than simply teach it, sparking curiosity and giving young people new reasons to become excited about science, technology and space.

Plans also include the Shuttle Bus Ambassador, a traveling interactive STEM experience designed to bring space exploration directly to schools, libraries, community centers and malls across Minnesota. The Ambassador will feature all-new interactive STEM experiences and a state-of-the-art space shuttle simulator, taking the excitement of Inspiration Space Port on the road — bringing the mission to communities across the state.

"The goal is to erase the line between watching and participating," Cliff Dew, CEO of Jumping Frog Entertainment, the chief architect and creative director of Inspiration Space Port, said in a release. "Our team is creating a destination where you don't just learn about space exploration — you step inside it. The technology we have available today gives us the opportunity to take families places they could once only imagine."

The project is currently in the planning and development stage, with work focused on site evaluation, attraction development, strategic partnerships, educational collaborations and sponsorship opportunities.

What to expect from Inspiration Space Port

Plans are to have visitors walk along an elevated walkways that are suspended 20 feet above the attractions below, the walkway, according to the website, follows the curve of the dome as it leads to Shuttle Inspiration. Along the way, interactive kiosks, authentic full-scale props, re-created historic artifacts and an immersive multimedia chronicle the remarkable story of the U.S. space shuttle program.

Visitors will step into the orbiter through its open payload bay, where towering LED displays, interactive exhibits, and unexpected digital surprises bring the story of NASA's space shuttle program vividly to life. In addition, there are plans for an orbiter simulation, exploration of mysterious ice formations, and an arcade.

There are also plans for an observatory, a restaurant, a retail store and a 180-seat theater. The auditorium will host live presentations, immersive films, guest speakers, STEM programs, corporate events, private celebrations and community gatherings.

Getting the Inspiration space shuttle mock-up to Minnesota

In April 2024, according to the website, Jason Bernick discovered a remarkable full-scale NASA space shuttle mock-up orbiter named Inspiration. His friend, Felicity-John Saint John, had a vision to bring the shuttle to Minnesota. At the time, the shuttle was destined to be dismantled and scrapped.

“I couldn’t stop thinking about it,” Bernick said on the website. “Standing in front of a shuttle of this size, you quickly realize it represents far more than aluminum, steel, and composite materials. It represents one of the greatest engineering achievements in history and the thousands of people whose ideas, dedication, and courage helped make the Space Shuttle Program possible.”

Bernick said he knew that if someone didn’t step forward, “this remarkable piece of American history would be lost forever.”

“Out of my passion for NASA and space exploration, I made the decision to personally fund the effort to save the shuttle,” he said. “I established a nonprofit foundation, brought together community support, and with an extraordinary team, we carefully dismantled, transported, and secured Inspiration in Minnesota — giving it the opportunity for a permanent future.”

More details about the enterprise will be released in the coming months.

Tags: [Inspiration Space Port](#), [STEM](#), [Shuttle Inspiration](#), [space exploration](#), [tourism](#), [space shuttle](#), [St. Cloud](#), [family attractions](#), [science and technology](#), [Minnesota](#)