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### **MEDIA ADVISORY : M09-200**

### **NASA Hosts National Lunar Robotics Moon Excavation Competition**

WASHINGTON -- Reporters are invited to attend the 2009 Regolith Excavation Challenge Oct. 17-18 at NASA's Ames Research Center at Moffett Field, Calif. The \$750,000 prize challenge is a nationwide competition that focuses on developing improved handling technologies for moon dirt, known as lunar regolith.

Part of NASA's Centennial Challenges Program, the competition will see 23 teams use robots they designed and built to excavate simulated lunar soil. Teams will test their robots in a box approximately 13 feet square and one-and-a-half feet deep that contains eight tons of simulated moon soil.

To qualify for a prize, a robot must dig up at least 330 pounds of regolith and deposit it into a container in 30 minutes. Trophies will be presented to the top three teams.

The two-day event also will feature exhibits and speakers highlighting hands-on education projects, robotics and space exploration.

NASA and California Space Authority Inc. of Santa Maria, along with its sister organization, the California Space Education and Workforce Institute, are co-hosting the competition in collaboration with the NASA Lunar Science Institute. Also supporting the competition are Diani Building Corp. of Santa Maria, Calif., and Empirical Systems Aerospace of Pismo Beach, Calif.

For a complete schedule of events, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/centers/ames/events/2009/10.17.09.html>

To follow the event on Twitter, visit:

[http://www.twitter.com/regolith\\_chal](http://www.twitter.com/regolith_chal)

To watch videos and for more information about the Regolith Excavation Challenge, visit:

<http://www.regolith.csewi.org>

For more information about NASA's Centennial Challenges, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/offices/ipp/home>

For more information about the California Space Authority, visit:

<http://www.californiaspaceauthority.org>

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