

**Gary Ervin**  
**27<sup>th</sup> NSS Opening Ceremony Remarks – Video Intro**  
**Colorado Springs, Colorado**  
**Monday, April 11, 2011**

Thank you, Elliot (Pulham – Space Foundation CEO). Good evening and welcome to tonight's Opening Ceremony. Competing against cocktails, good food and fireworks is no easy task so I'll keep my remarks brief.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the sacrifices of our brave service men and women engaged in conflict overseas. Their efforts are enabled by space-based assets that are second to none. Today America is still the world's premier space power. It is imperative we maintain that position while managing the positive and negative aspects as others around the globe catch up.

Over the next few days we'll be hearing distinguished speakers outline how our intelligence, civil and military space communities are dealing with similar problems. I'm not here to downplay the formidable challenges we face – budgetary, political and technical. But we've been here before.

Budgets go up and down. Economies expand and contract. There are peaks and valleys of procurement and innovation. But the space industry's ultimate course has been one of growth and technological advancement.

The past decades have seen major advances in commercial space, protected military satellite communications, missile warning, earth observation and space science missions. It only took fifty years to go from a single, simple Sputnik to some 22,000 man-made objects orbiting the Earth, carrying out a wide range of missions. We've built machines that visited many of the planets and moons of our solar system. The information provided by these machines has been invaluable and the engineering challenges and triumphs considerable.

We know technology-driven schedule and cost-efficiencies haven't fully impacted our industry as they have in others. And obviously, a satellite can't be developed and delivered with the ease of an iPad when it must be certified to operate in the hostile environment of space. But for many, space remains too expensive and too slow.

So we must do better and I'm confident change will come. That's because the next generation will shape the industry to reflect the world they have grown up in, one where technology enables faster, more efficient and more affordable systems across the board.

All of us in this room have an obligation to build organizations where this next generation can thrive and drive that change. They are telling us with their career choices that they won't stand for the status quo. We ignore them at our peril.

I'm both an optimist and a realist. Yes, there will be less money for programs tomorrow than there was in the past. Yes, space is more congested, contested and competitive. These conditions won't make any of our jobs easier. But they will focus our minds and force us to affect positive change we may have resisted in easier times.

I'll conclude by noting tomorrow we commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first space shuttle flight. This year, we will commemorate the final flight. That program required courage and engineering brilliance comparable to all those that proceeded. Tonight I'd like to recognize the engineers, the technicians, the scientists and every other professional that took the Space Shuttle from blue print to blue sky and space. Programs start, evolve, and end. But people are the constant. They will ensure our future endeavors are successful, inspirational and worthy of the proud legacy of the past decades.

*(ROLL VIDEO)*