

For immediate release

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WEST SYSTEM® epoxy set to go sub-orbital

A NOVA 2 rocket being developed by Starchaser is within ten months of its first launch. This one-seater rocket is a significant step towards future plans which include a rocket capable of taking two passengers with the pilot.

This uniquely British project is being built in Hyde, Cheshire with WEST SYSTEM epoxy and glass fibre as the main components for the capsule.

NOVA 2 is one of a series of rockets being developed by Starchaser. The design for the volunteer-built rocket has been thoroughly examined by the European Space Agency following the award of an ESA Study Contract.

“Upon completion of the contract they gave our plans a hearty thumbs-up,” says Steve Bennett (Starchaser MD). “Everything NASA does is in the public domain, so if we want to see how they solved a particular engineering problem, it’s easy to look up. We’ve got two dozen part time volunteers working on the build as a labour of love, they’re a fantastic team.”

A NOVA 2 test flight is planned with a crash test dummy, for the early part of 2021 from a site in northern England (Covid-19 permitting). Manned flights will ultimately take place from a purpose-built Spaceport in New Mexico.

“I’ve always been interested in space and building rockets,” says Steve who gave up his day job 22 years ago to start the company.

“Over the years the designs have got bigger and better and more sophisticated.”

His supporters agree. He’s been able to finance the build with £2m garnered from selling 20% of the company, and seat sales which have already taken place on Thunderstar (a project planned for the future). Wessex Resins and Adhesives has been sponsoring Steve for 20 years, with a supply of WEST SYSTEM epoxy which the company manufactures under licence from Gougeon Brothers Inc.

“WEST SYSTEM epoxy is really good stuff,” Steve says. “There’s nothing better available for making components. The whole capsule is made out of epoxy and glass fibre. The leading edges of the fins are made from epoxy, together with most of the internal structure. We’re currently using WEST SYSTEM epoxy to modify the brackets for the parachute system. There’s probably about 100 litres of WEST SYSTEM epoxy in the capsule.”

“We’re delighted to be able to sponsor NOVA 2,” says Ian Oliver. “WEST SYSTEM epoxy has been in production for over fifty years and we’re celebrating that by looking at all the projects which are made using the fantastic array of products. This is the longest sponsorship we’ve undertaken and it’s testament to Steve’s ambition and direction that he’s so close to launching. We’re proud to be able to supply WEST SYSTEM epoxy to take people into space. It’s not what it was designed for, but given its innate strength and durability, we are delighted that it’s passed muster and is being used in this ingenious manner.”

Steve also receives additional revenue from his work with schools, making educational visits with previous iterations of his design. Find out more at <https://starchaser.co.uk>.

Interested parties can enter a free contest to win a rocket ride in the future, when as the project continues, the capsule will be developed to take two passengers and a pilot (<https://starchaser.co.uk/win-a-rocket-ride/>). The cost of a flight to see the curvature of the earth and experience weightlessness is £250,000. Seats are already sold and Starchaser currently has 500 people on the waiting list.

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Notes to Editors:

A selection of images is available online at <https://maa.agency/media-centre/>

- Wessex Resins and Adhesives manufactures WEST SYSTEM, PRO-SET and Entropy Resins epoxy products in the UK under license from Gougeon Brothers Inc., and distributes these leading brands across the whole of Europe, Africa and the Middle East via a well- respected distribution network.
- Wessex Resins and Adhesives provides international support for the world-renowned WEST SYSTEM, PRO-SET and Entropy Resins epoxy brands.
- Since Michigan boatbuilding brothers Meade, Joel and Jan Gougeon first experimented with the bonding power of epoxy over 50 years ago, the WEST SYSTEM and PRO-SET product ranges have become the epoxies of choice for private boat owners, boat manufacturers, chandlers and naval engineers throughout the world.
- Wessex Resins has been working in partnership with Gougeon Brothers, Inc. for more than 36 years, manufacturing WEST SYSTEM, PRO-SET and Entropy Resins epoxies here in the UK.
- Whether an epoxy is needed for laminating, bonding, coating, tooling or infusion, the combined breadth of WEST SYSTEM, PRO-SET and Entropy Resins products will provide the solution. WEST SYSTEM and PRO-SET have passed extensive quality testing. They are certified by Lloyds Register and DNVL.

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