



**PRESS RELEASE, January 14, 2010
Ad Astra Rocket Company and MEI
Technologies, Inc. form Strategic
Alliance**

[Houston, TX. For immediate release] – [Ad Astra Rocket Company](#), a world leader in plasma rockets and [MEI Technologies, Inc.](#), a nationwide aerospace, defense and technology company, have joined forces creating a strategic alliance in support of Ad Astra’s Variable Specific Impulse Magnetoplasma Rocket (VASIMR[®]) rocket development. The alliance combines Ad Astra’s expertise in plasma physics and advanced rocket propulsion with MEI Technologies’ well- established knowledge in safety, payload integration, engineering and advanced technology. The two companies have had a fruitful relationship for more than five years and share common values of excellence, integrity and ethics.

As a first step in this alliance, MEI Technologies will provide support in the development and integration of the VF-200 payload, a project to demonstrate Ad Astra’s proprietary technology, the VASIMR[®], on the U.S. National Laboratory portion of the International Space Station. VASIMR[®] is a high power electric thruster for in-space propulsion that uses radio waves and strong magnetic fields to ionize and accelerate propellant and direct the resulting intense plasma jet to generate thrust. Selected by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics as one of the top 10 emerging aerospace technologies of 2009, the

VASIMR[®] engine is fueled by abundant, inexpensive propellants and has demonstrated exhaust velocities from five to nearly 40 times higher than the best chemical rockets. The company’s current prototype engine, the VX-200, demonstrated its full 200 kW power rating in tests conducted last September 30 at Ad Astra’s Houston facility. In the near- term, when combined with high power photovoltaic solar arrays currently under development for space applications, the VASIMR[®] engine is expected to provide a transformational approach to in-space transportation, significantly reducing costs and enhancing efficiency over conventional chemical rockets. Farther in the future, and combined with high nuclear electric power, VASIMR[®] can drastically reduce the travel time for human and robotic missions to Mars and beyond.

“We have had a long and rewarding association with MEI Technologies, and it is a company that we trust to perform. Through this alliance, our team of scientists can focus on enhancing VASIMR[®]’s capability while leveraging MEI Technologies’ experience and expertise in payload integration and project development. In this relationship, we share a common vision: to revolutionize space transportation and exploration,” said Ad Astra CEO Dr. Franklin Chang Díaz.

“Ad Astra’s impressive technology coupled with our payload integration capabilities will ultimately result in innovative cargo and supply mechanisms, greater access to

resources and broader support for robotic and human missions in space,” said MEI Technologies CEO Ed Muñiz.

About Ad Astra Rocket Company

Ad Astra Rocket Company is a privately-owned corporation established January 14, 2005 to commercialize the technology of the VASIMR[®] engine, a plasma propulsion system originally studied by NASA, with potential to support an emerging in-space transportation market. The company has its main laboratory and corporate headquarters at 141 W. Bay Area Boulevard in Webster, Texas, USA, about three km west of the NASA Johnson Space Center. Supporting research is provided to Ad Astra by its wholly-owned subsidiary, Ad Astra Rocket Company, Costa Rica, located in Guanacaste, Costa Rica.

About MEI Technologies, Inc.

MEI Technologies, Inc. is a nationwide technology company providing innovative solutions in aerospace, defense and biotechnology industries for public and private sectors. Offering best-value products, services and development support to clients in government and commercial sectors globally, MEI Technologies employs more than 800 employees in seven states with estimated 2009 revenues of \$136 million. Recently ranked by *Space News* as a global top 50 space manufacturing and services company, MEI Technologies continues to evolve through organic growth, joint ventures and strategic investments.

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