PARTNERSHIP WILL PRESERVE THE PAST

The Apollo Lunar Excursion Module Simulator (LEMS), used to help train every astronaut who set foot on the moon, will be carefully transported from NASA's Langley Research Center (LaRC), Hampton, to the New Horizons Technical Center (NHTC), Friday morning, September 15.

At New Horizons, students will restore the historic landmark and prepare it for display in the proposed Virginia Air and Space Center in downtown Hampton.

The NHTC will perform the work in partnership with NASA-LaRC, the National Historic Landmarks Commission and the Virginia Air and Space Center.

"We think of space as the future, but now we have to think about preserving the past in space," said NHTC Director Dr. Ralph W. Johnson, referring to the four-way partnership that will preserve the lunar module.

The module was part of the Langley Lunar Landing Research Facility, an essential facility that allowed NASA to train Apollo astronauts to fly in a simulated lunar environment. Neil Armstrong, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin and 22 other astronauts used the facility to practice piloting problems they would encounter in the last 150 feet of descent to the surface of the moon. The facility was built in LaRC in 1965.
In 1985, the LEMS and the lunar landing facility were designated National Historic Landmarks by the National Parks Service.

After refurbishment, the lunar lander will be the cornerstone exhibit of the new Virginia Air and Space Center to open in 1992.

"While refurbishing," stated Principal Dr. Patrick M. Konopnicki, "the students will learn the engineering design and construction principles of the 'Lander' from actual engineers and technicians who worked on the project."

Additionally, the students will be working from original blueprints and photographs.

A restoration advisory committee made up of past and present NASA employees associated with the LEMS, along with a liaison officer from the Virginia Air and Space Center, will oversee and monitor the restoration process which should take about two years. The NHTC will also form an advisory committee which will interact with the NASA committee.

In 1984, NASA officially adopted the NHTC as a part of President Reagan's "Adopt-a-school-program."

"We really stress the partnership," Konopnicki said. "It's a natural outgrowth of the relationship we have with NASA. This project has had a positive effect on the school climate, not only on the students but the teachers as well. We've had them both ask: 'When is it coming?'"

"We get to use it as an incentive," Johnson said. "Only our best students will work on it. We view it as an academic tool, an incentive tool, and a recruitment tool. After all, there is this sense of history about it."

Located at 520 Butler Farm Road in Hampton, NHTC serves students from six area school districts and 14 high schools. In addition to offering regional vocational technical courses, New Horizons was designated as one of the state's four Governor's schools for gifted science students. The location of NHTC near NASA "has been as asset for both students and faculty at the center," stated Konopnicki. "The partnership provides New Horizons students with challenging state-of-
the-art experiences through association with NASA scientists, engineers and technicians. These experiences span the educational spectrum, including both gifted and vocational-technical programs."

EDITORS NOTE: The Lunar Excursion Module Simulator will be transported by flatbed truck from outside the LaRC hangar annex (Building 1244) to the New Horizons Technical Center sometime between 9 a.m. and noon Friday, September 15. Phone Dr. Ralph Johnson at (804) 766-0000, Dr. Patrick Konopnicki at (804) 766-1100, or Allan C. Hanrahan at (804) 864-2762 for details regarding this unusual photo opportunity.

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