

Civic Minds

Date: Friday, March 11, 2016

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Article Title: Clouds part to reveal Bezos' Blue Origin

Section: Main, A1

Vocabulary:

Look up the definition of ***unbridled***. Please write the definition and create a new sentence, using your own words.

“Bezos constantly jumped in with his own eager comments, revealing both detailed technical knowledge and ***unbridled*** enthusiasm for the adventure of space.”

Comprehension Questions

1. We'll have to stop calling local space-rocket company Blue Origin “secretive.” Why?
2. How many people currently work at Blue Origin? How many does he plan to hire in the next year?
3. What have Blue Origin engineers designed and created so far?
4. That rocket has now twice successfully launched unmanned into space and returned with a safe vertical landing, in pursuit of Bezos' desire to make space rockets designed to be what?
5. Bezos said the rocket, following its initial flight in November, was reused in January after what?
6. What is Bezos developing and building in Kent?
7. What will the BE-4 power for NASA?
8. Blue Origin will also use the BE-4 to power what?
9. Washington state needs to pass legislation that extends what tax credit?
10. Describe the New Shepard rockets?
11. Much of the serious engineering in Kent is now devoted to the BE-4 engine. What temperature does it reach? How does the fuel circulate, in order to prevent a meltdown?
12. Full engine testing will come later this year, and the BE-4 should be approved by NASA next year, Bezos said, ready for the first Vulcan launch scheduled for what year?
13. What local company is Bezos pulling from, to get top talent in machinists and engineering?
14. Describe the lobby and office space? What is it designed with?

Class Discussion Questions and Essay Prompts:

He said he leaves Amazon to come check in on Blue Origin most Wednesdays, and has no problem keeping up. “I only pursue things I have a passion for. These things give me energy. They don’t take it away,” said Bezos. “I’ve been studying rockets since I was 5 years old. It’s joyful for me.”

- Do you take opportunities to pursue what you’re passionate about? Things can give you energy? Why or why not?
- What have you been interested in, since you were a young child?

Bezos said he hopes his reusable rockets will make space travel routine for humans and will make them feel safer: “I would rather fly in a used 787 than on that 787’s first flight.”

Test pilots could go up in the New Shepard rockets as early as next year, said Bezos — though since the spacecraft flies autonomously, they’d be more test passengers than pilots.

Commercial flights with paying passengers could follow in 2018, he said.

- Is flying to space something that interests you? Why or why not?

Essay

Beyond the fun-filled lobby, it’s clear Blue Origin is a temple to serious engineering and to furthering Bezos’ vision for space exploration.

He reiterated during the tour his ambition to make possible a future where there are “millions of people living and working in space.” In a few hundred years, without a change of direction, humans will have completely exhausted the Earth’s energy resources, Bezos said.

He foresees a future in which heavy industry, manufacturing and mining of resources is done on nearby planets and this blue Earth (hence the name “Blue Origin”) is “rezoned as light industrial and residential,” an eco-paradise suited for civilization and fueled by the limitless resources beyond the planet.

He conceded he’ll be long dead before that happens, but he wants to get it started.

- What do you think of Bezos’ vision where millions of humans will be working and living on different planets and tapping into their individual natural resources?
- Can you imagine this system of life happening? Is this the best viable option for human survival in the future? Why or why not?

Newspaper-related CBA activity: U.S. Policy

How the United States government interacts with the world affects people across the globe. Analyze and evaluate the causes and effects of US foreign policy on people in the United States and across the world.

- Using The Seattle Times e-Edition, find an article from this week that deals with world politics or foreign policy.

- What are the main points of view from someone living in that particular country? How is that “view” similar and different than your own opinion, regarding the specific issue the article is discussing?
- Why is it important to study and learn about foreign policy? How does it help you understand the world we live in, using current issues and events?

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