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artistic impression of
Lynx Mark I
Xcor

[Lynx Mark I, the Future of Commercial Spaceflight](#)

Xcor reveals the plans for Lynx Mark I

There are possibly thousands of commercial air flights being carried out every day on Earth, however not even one commercial spaceflight. This is merely because there is no commercial spacecraft available at this moment capable of conducting more than one flight into space each day. To be more accurate, even the spacecrafts used by state space agencies require more than a month of preparation to execute a single launch into space.

This is soon to change. Virgin Galactic and Xcor Aerospace are just two of the companies working to develop the first spacecraft in the world able to carry out a commercial spaceflight. Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo is currently under construction while Xcor has just revealed the plans of its future Lynx Mark I spacecraft.

Xcor officials say that their spacecraft will be finished and capable of orbital flight in exactly two years to this day. During a period of six months in 2010, the Lynx Mark I spacecraft should perform 50 test flights to ensure that it is working properly before sending it into its first commercial flight into space.

Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo, similar to the X Prize winner SpaceShipOne, will be flown to high altitudes by a specialized carrier plane, before being released into the atmosphere to fly towards space on its own. Lynx Mark I, on the other hand, will take off on its own from long runways and will use its power alone to reach orbit. Lynx will also have the capability to abort atmosphere re-entry if something goes wrong, unlike the US space shuttle which once put on a re-entry trajectory cannot go back.

Xcor reveals that the engines of the Lynx Mark I spacecraft will be powered with kerosene, much in the same way airplanes do. However, by modifying the ratio between fuel and oxidizer it will be able to make rapid turnaround times. Xcor company president Jeffrey Greason said in a press statement that "Our company's goal has always been to build rocket-powered vehicles that can be flown and operated like regular aircrafts". By the time it will be completed, the Lynx will be fully reusable and will also burn fuel in a clean way, much cleaner than the conventional engines used today.

Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipOne will have the capability of carrying up to six persons at a time in space, albeit the Lynx Mark I design only has two seats and will be much smaller than a private jet. Therefore it will be able to carry only one passenger, except for the pilot of course. Although a flight into space could last a little as 25 minutes, there are potentially a few thousand people which would pay a lot of money for the unique experience.

"From the start, Xcor has been committed to closely matching their available funding to solid, step-by-step achievements that lead to the next market or the next funding source. The Lynx is another step in that pattern – and on its foundation, there is a direct road to truly low-cost, reliable human access to orbit," said Charles Lurio, writer and editor for The Lurio Report.

Such a flight into space would probably be very expensive, however it would still be only a fraction of that of currently available rocket flights. Similar to Virgin Galactic, Xcor is planning its second spacecraft, namely Lynx Mark II, which will fly twice as high as the Lynx

Mark I.