

State Called Top

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Shuttle Prospect

By KEN PETERSON

Kansas is among the top four contenders in the nation for a proposed space shuttle station, Lt. Gov. Reynolds Shultz said Friday night.

He acknowledged, however, that Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., is still "very much in the running" and listed White Sands, N. M., and Cape Kennedy as other prime locations for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration project.

Shultz made the remarks in an address at the Downtown Ramada Inn to the Great State Council, the Kansas promotion arm of the State Chamber of Commerce.

The lieutenant governor, who personally led a delegation of nine state business, science and government leaders to Washington in August to discuss the program with NASA officials, said Cape Kennedy possibly would be a site because of sharp budget cuts in the space program.

White Sands could present international problems if the site were located there, he said, particularly if the crafts should crash in Mexico.

NASA has set requirements that a place must meet for the site and Shultz believes Kansas has all of them.

"First, they said it must have through highways, which Kansas has with I-70," he said. "It must have colleges and universities and in Kansas we have KU, which already is working with NASA. There are related programs at Wichita State, Kansas State and Fort Hays."

Other necessities include availability of a labor force. Shultz said workers in the aircraft manufacturing plants in Wichita could become skilled to operate the shuttle station after a small amount of training.

The space shuttle station would require 360,000 acres if put into operation. The government would own and completely control 58,000 acres for the space base with the remainder designated as a buffer zone.

Most of the buffer zone would be leased back to the original owners, he said.

The shuttle site would create 5,000 new jobs in Kansas and Shultz said conservative estimates indicate this would mean more than \$3 million in extra tax monies for Kansas.

"A lot of people argue that with 58,000 acres off the tax rolls, the state will lose \$80,000," Shultz said. But the \$3 million in new taxes is certainly a lot of 80 thousands of dollars."

The total annual salaries generated by the shuttle site would reach into the \$60-million range.

"Whenever a new industry moves into an area, one of the first things people holler about

is the pollution," the lieutenant-governor said. "There will be no pollution with the shuttle craft because it burns liquid hydrogen."

The only pollution factor Shultz said, were not outside harmful limits.

NASA has been studying two main locations in western Kansas for the space base—one near Garden City and the other in the Hays-Russell area.

Several persons have voiced opposition to the space shuttle being located in the Hays area, but Shultz said he talked to many people from there and said he only found one woman who criticized the project. She changed her mind after discussing the site with him, he added.

No Kansas Lobby

One of the major problems facing the Kansas site is the lack of lobbyists in Washington. California has a full-time lobbying group trying to sway NASA to the west coast location.

"On this we're stymied," he said. "We simply don't have the money to lobby all the time. I guess you could say we're taking a one-shot chance in Washington."

Earlier reports from Washington stated that California already had been selected as the site, but Shultz said there was no truth to them.

"There will not be a decision until sometime in October or November," he declared.

Gov. Robert Docking, on a separate trip, also went to Washington in August to talk with NASA officials. Docking, however, has remained cautious with the subject and has maintained a neutral stand.