



2026 Summer Workshop

Location: Collaborative Computing Center
Idaho National Laboratory

Welcome to STAR☆FIRE 2026!

At the intersection of space exploration, nuclear science, aerospace innovation, and advanced physics this gathering is a beacon of hope and action for the future. Hosted by Idaho National Laboratory, STAR☆FIRE unites students and experts to explore nuclear power in space, catalyzing discovery, discussion and development in this critical field.

This event brings together undergraduates, graduate students, recent graduates and leading professionals for an unparalleled opportunity to showcase research, build connections and shape the next generation of pioneering space endeavors. From July 20-22, the state-of-the-art Collaborative Computing Center on INL's Idaho Falls campus will be the epicenter of collaboration and discovery. Select participants will also explore INL's world-class facilities, including the Materials and Fuels Complex, the Advanced Test Reactor Complex, and the historic Experimental Breeder Reactor-I — living testaments to what humanity can achieve when we rise to the challenge.

To invited speakers and panelists: your expertise and mentorship inspire the future of this field. To our student attendees: you were chosen because you belong here. Be bold in your presentations, curious in your questions, and open to forging connections that could shape the missions of tomorrow.

The future of space nuclear science takes flight here, and the world needs your brilliance now more than ever. Welcome to STAR☆FIRE 2026.

MONDAY, JULY 20 | Introduction

7:00 A.M.	Registration
8:00 A.M.	STARFIRE Introduction Jackson Harter <i>INL</i>
8:05 A.M.	Keynote Astronaut Stephen Bowen <i>NASA</i>
8:35 A.M.	Opening the Solar System with Space Nuclear Power and Propulsion Mike Houts <i>NASA (retired)</i>
9:15 A.M.	Break
10:00 A.M.	Lightning Talks Students
NOON	Lunch
12:45 P.M.	Lightning Talks Students
3:00 P.M.	Break
3:20 P.M.	Lightning Talks Students
5:30 P.M.	Adjourn

Space Technology for Advanced Reactors Fueling
Innovation in Research and Exploration

TUESDAY, JULY 21 | Space Mission

7:00 A.M.	Registration
8:00 A.M.	Nuclear-powered Space Missions Bethany Eppig <i>NASA Glenn Research Center</i> Mike Houts <i>NASA (retired)</i> Stephen Johnson <i>INL</i> Bhavya Lal <i>RAND Corporation</i> Bailey Reichelt <i>Aegis Space Law</i> Shervin Taghavi <i>Jet Propulsion Laboratory</i>
10:55 A.M.	Break
11:15 A.M.	DOE Space Reactor Program Overview Sebastian Corbisiero <i>INL, DOE-NE SRP National Technical Director</i> Ryan Coulson <i>INL</i> Dianne Ezell <i>INL, DOE-NE ASI National Technical Director</i> DV Rao <i>INL</i>
NOON	Lunch
1:00 P.M.	Autonomous Systems and AI for Space Reactors Wenqian Dong <i>Oregon State University</i> Matt Anderson <i>INL</i> Ross Kunz <i>INL</i>
2:30 P.M.	Break
2:50 P.M.	Speed Mentoring Jess Gehin, Sheree Ahart, Dawn Scates, Sam Bays, Jeff Phillips, Konor Frick, Vivek Agarwal, Piyush Sabharwall, Steve Hayes, Simon Pimblott and in-person panelists: Theresa Cutler, Cole Kostelac and Lisa Hudston (LANL)
4:50 P.M.	Closing
5:15 P.M.	Evening Reception <i>Collaborative Computing Center</i>
7:30 P.M.	Closing

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22 | FSP and NTP Reactors

7:00 A.M.	Registration
8:00 A.M.	Morning Introduction Jackson Harter <i>INL</i>
8:05 A.M.	NCERC Overview Theresa Cutler <i>LANL</i>
8:35 A.M.	Break
8:45 A.M.	Inside Space Nuclear Reactors: Exploring Components for Off-World Energy Systems Sam Bays <i>INL</i> Jordan Evans <i>INL</i> Ryan Fronk <i>INL</i> Lisa Hudston <i>LANL</i> Stefano Terlizzi <i>Pennsylvania State University</i> Dean Wang <i>Ohio State University</i>
NOON	Lunch
12:45 P.M.	Countdown to Critical: Nuclear Power Timelines and Industry Collaboration Richard Williams <i>Aalo Atomics</i> Jason Andrus <i>Antares Nuclear</i> Everett Redmond <i>Oklo Inc.</i> James Tompkins <i>Lightbridge Corporation</i>
2:15 P.M.	Break
2:30 P.M.	Nuclear in Orbit: Exploring Applications and Experiments for Space Exploration Will Grier <i>NASA</i> Mike Houts <i>NASA (retired)</i> Cole Kostelac <i>LANL</i> Noah McFerran <i>LLNL</i> Suzanne Nowicki <i>LANL</i> Vince Wang <i>University of Utah</i> Bryan Zilka <i>BWX Technologies</i>
5:00 P.M.	Closing Remarks Jackson Harter <i>INL</i>
5:10 P.M.	Tour Details Jackson Harter <i>INL</i>