

Steve Fossett LSR Declares Driver Short-List



Sparks, NV, Feb. 29 – The Steve Fossett World Land Speed Racing Team today announced a preliminary short list of eight driver candidates for its jet-powered race car that will attempt to establish a new Absolute Supersonic Land Speed Record in excess of 800MPH. Candidates are from motorsports and aviation and include:

Vicki Cruse – 2007 US Unlimited Aerobatic Champion
Lt. Alex “Kone” Deitrich – Naval Aviator, F-18E Super Hornet
Jessie Harris – Jet Dragster Driver
Kathy Jarvis – Pro Rally and Off-Road Racer and Professional Stunt Woman
Peggy Llewellyn – NHRA Pro Stock Motorcycle Rider
Dr. Jeanine Pflum – Bonneville Salt Flats National Record Holder
Melanie Troxel – NHRA Funny Car and Top Fuel Driver
Felicia “Petey” Verrett – Motorcycle Racer

“A few remaining applicants are still reviewing their ability to work with our schedule, and that’s been the hardest requirement for the qualified candidates,” **said Program Manager Eric Ahlstrom.** “We accepted going in that most of them would have other commitments with racing teams and sponsors. We reviewed many qualified applicants, and selected our short list based on applicable professional experience, physical constraints of the cockpit, and the ability to commit to our 2008 test and run schedule.”

The team remains committed to Steve Fossett’s vision and with the successful test firing of the jet engine, the driver evaluation and selection is in full swing. The driver will be exposed to a combination of G-loads and visual distortion greater than any other person has ever experienced. Assisting project manager Eric Ahlstrom in the process will be an advisory board of notable motorsports and aviation professionals. They include:

Lee Behel – Aviation World Speed Record Holder, Phantom pilot, Fossett LSR test driver, and Reno Air Race instructor;
RAF Wing Commander Andy Green – World Land Speed Record Holder, Thrust SSC at 763MPH and Dieselmax at 350MPH, Phantom and Tornado pilot;
Andy Granatelli -- “Mr. Indy 500”, Bonneville World Record Holder, driver development expert;
Paula Murphy -- First female licensed by NHRA to drive a fuel car ; also driven jet, rocket, sports, off-road , stock and Indy cars, driver instructor;
Al Teague – World Land Speed Record Holder at 409MPH;

The 48-foot long racer successfully completed static engine testing in January and will conduct low-speed rolling systems tests in March with test driver Lee Behel. The streamlined Fossett racer is powered by a single, 40,000 HP S&S Turbine LM-1500 jet engine said to have less than 1/4th the drag of the current record holder, Thrust SSC.

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