ORLANDO – Brooks Kimmel wants you to know that **NASA** is not out of business.

In fact, the space agency is hard at work, building not only the next generation vehicles for galactic travel, but also new infrastructure, launch pads, and everything else related to moving man closer to interplanetary travel.

But that's not all, the **SMTA** International keynote was quick to explain. In a 45-minute presentation Tuesday morning, Kimmel, deputy director of Safety, Health and Mission Assurance for NASA's information management branch, offered up a detailed, personal view of why the US government's foremost research and development group remains integral to the greater technology sector.

NASA's work is not just critical to reaching and understanding the science over the vast expanse of the universe, however. As Kimmel detailed, the technologies NASA develops have consistently led to productive applications right here on Earth.

"We're not just going to space to get a few moon rocks. It's to make life better for mankind."

He ticked off several inventions derived from NASA innovations, ranging from drive trains on Harley-Davidson motorcycles, which were adapted from transport shuttles NASA built, to portable heart monitors, cellular bioreactors, energy drinks and IR thermal imaging equipment. NASA's Glenn Research Center, for example, developed a polyimide, water-based liquid photoimageable resist.

"NASA [scientists] can never stop imagining what development [they are] working on now that in 10 years' time might save a life or change the world," Kimmel quipped.

On a personal note, Kimmel told how his own son grew so tall so fast, he experienced lingering and potentially fatal lung problems. A corrective surgical procedure recommended by his doctors had just a 50% success rate. Just days prior to signing the consent to the surgery, Kimmel was alerted to a new procedure adapted from NASA engineers that could correct his son's problem, with a 95% probability of success.

That technology was one of many that have been transferred to industry via NASA's spinoff technology commercialization program (www.spinoffs.nasa.gov).

Moreover, NASA is now developing research parks and bringing in university research teams to better use and understand the agency's innovations, all part of a plan to lower the costs of the fee-based transfer and licensing deals that migrate its scientists' far-out ideas into products useful for the public.

"It's a very exciting time" for NASA, Kimmel said. By the time he was done, it was hard to

disagree.

On Oct. 22, chat with Mike Buetow about PCB West and SMTAI at PCB Chat .