

# THE BEACH TIMES.com

YOUR WEEKLY NEWS ON THE GOLD COAST

Guanacaste, Costa Rica

Last Updated: Friday, September 14, 2007

SEARCH:

SEARCH

## AROUND THE TOWN

HOME PAGE

NEWS

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

AROUND THE TOWN

EDUCATION

FEATURE

FOOD

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS

LEGALLY SPEAKING

PEOPLE

REAL ESTATE

RODICAB'S SKETCHBOOK

SHIPPING NEWS

SPORTS

NEWS ARCHIVE



Friday, July 13, 2007

### Franklin Goes Postal Over Plasma Rocket

By Britton Jacob-Schram

It appears as though the innovative plasma propulsion rocket devised by Costa Rican national hero and former NASA astronaut, Dr Franklin Chang Díaz, will be taking flight sooner than expected.

Via air mail, that is.

It's not the first time something having to do with Dr Chang has flown around the world licked-and-sticked to postcards, envelopes, and packages — about four years ago, the rocket scientist's portrait graced a special stamp alongside the Phanaeus changdiazii beetle, which was named after him.

It is, however, the first time the postal service, Correos de Costa Rica, has paid homage — in 160,000 mail-able ways — to the work of his Liberia-based, NASA-contracted Ad Astra Rocket Company.

© The Beach Times



"I think it's a big motivation for our team, but also a big responsibility,

#### RECENT EDITIONS

Friday, September 14, 2007  
**New School Comes To Term In Flamingo**

[+ MORE](#)

Friday, September 07, 2007  
**Kids' Day Is 76 Years Young in Costa Rica**

[+ MORE](#)

Friday, August 31, 2007  
**Dengue To Dirt Bikes, Randi Swears By Acupuncture**

[+ MORE](#)

Friday, August 24, 2007  
**National Park Day Draws Attention To Illegal Fishing**

[+ MORE](#)

Friday, August 17, 2007  
**After A Life In Music, Ray Tico Finally Goes Home**

[+ MORE](#)

Friday, August 10, 2007  
**Mom's The Word Around Doña Korina's House**

[+ MORE](#)

which we're taking up with a lot of optimism....just like many other Costa Ricans' work, we're bringing more publicity to our country," said Ad Astra Mechanical Engineer Jorge Oguilve.

The team's next goal is no small feat: by the end of the year, NASA and Dr Chang --- who spends half his time in Guanacaste, and half in Houston keeping an eye on other aspects of the rocket's progress --- are hoping to unveil a prototype of a plasma-propelled rocket engine. And on the goal-roster three years from now: the rocket's first flight into space.

The stamp with the purplish, gooey-substance (second on right) is the plasma the team works to contain. Magnetic fields are fired up, creating an invisible container --- the plasma, which harnesses energy by reaching temperatures of the Sun, never comes into contact with the rocket's components.

Conventional rockets blow off all their thrust on liftoff, coasting to their destination. Plasma technology will allow the rocket to accelerate in space, cutting travel time to Mars, for instance, from 10 months to 39 days.

