A VENUS SCIENCE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE: IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES THROUGH A SCIENTIST-FOCUSED APPROACH. A. J. Shaner¹, S. Buxner², W. S. Kiefer¹, A. H. Treiman¹, ¹Lunar and Planetary Institute, USRA (shaner@lpi.usra.edu), ²Planetary Science Institute.

Introduction: The next decade will witness a fleet of spacecraft arriving at Venus to study the veiled planet. Three missions, two led by NASA, one by ESA, will no doubt answer many outstanding questions about Venus, and, of course, raise more questions. In addition to the missions, the Lunar and Planetary Institute (LPI) is leading a series of four meetings (the Venus Science Initiative; www.lpi.usra.edu/science/initiatives/venus) beginning in May 2022 (Fig. 1). The goal of this initiative is to consolidate the science community’s understanding of Venus in anticipation of incoming data from DAVINCI, VERITAS, and EnVision.

The next decade of preparation for the long-awaited return to Venus presents a unique opportunity for the Venus community to create and implement an organic, community-driven public engagement initiative – a collaboration between scientists, the Venus Exploration Analysis Group, educators, and public engagement professionals – to raise awareness in the American public of the current state of scientific knowledge of Venus and to generate interest in the upcoming missions.

National Survey: As the Venus community prepares to engage audiences with the excitement of Venus science and future exploration, we are planning a national scale survey to assess the American public’s current knowledge of Venus. In 2022, a Survey of Venus Knowledge, or The Great American Venus Survey, will be created. This survey is intended to be completed by American adults 18 years of age and older, across multiple demographics. The results of this survey will be shared widely and will become a resource to anyone planning to conduct Venus public engagement activities.

Current Possibilities: Several public engagement activities/resources have been discussed to date. Examples include a Venus art contest, musical performances with scientist Q&A, poetry contests, short videos highlighting Venus researchers, video demonstrations of unique Venusian volcanism (Fig. 2), and live streaming telescopic feeds of Venus with scientist Q&A.

Community Input: We invite scientists, educators, and public engagement professionals interested in this effort to join in planning or indicating interest in future efforts. Please share your own ideas and indicate your interest at https://tinyurl.com/VSPEI22. Additionally, we will be inviting ideas and connections related to this initiative during LPSC.

Additional Information: If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding this initiative, please contact Andy Shaner at shaner@lpi.usra.edu.