



URBAN CHALLENGE

Harnessing American Ingenuity

News Release

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

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Contact: Johanna Jones
(202) 289-2001
jjones(at)stratacomm.net
Don Shipley
(571) 212-7492
dshipley(at)stratacomm.net
Jan Walker
(703) 509-7506
jan.walker(at)darpa.mil

DARPA ANNOUNCES 36 SEMI-FINALISTS FOR URBAN CHALLENGE *Autonomous Vehicle Competition to be Held in Victorville, Calif.*

(Anaheim, Calif.) – Dr. Tony Tether, director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), today announced the 36 teams (list attached) selected as semi-finalists for the Urban Challenge. The semi-finalists will next compete in the Urban Challenge National Qualification Event (NQE) scheduled for October 26-31, 2007. The top 20 teams from the NQE will move on to the Urban Challenge final event on November 3, and compete for cash prizes worth \$2 million for first, \$1 million for second, and \$500,000 for third place.

DARPA also announced that both the Urban Challenge NQE and final event will take place at the urban military training facility located on the former George Air Force Base in Victorville, Calif. DARPA selected the location because its network of urban roads best simulate the type of terrain American forces operate in when deployed overseas. “The robotic vehicles will conduct simulated military supply missions at the site. This adds many of the elements these vehicles would face in operational environments,” explained Dr. Tether.

The Victorville site is currently used by the U.S. Army to train for urban operations. As soon as the Army finishes their training rotation, DARPA will conduct clean-up operations to ready the site for the competition. DARPA emphasized that as of today’s announcement, the site is closed until team arrival on October 24. Photographs of the site and more information about the event are available at www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge.

At the NQE and the final event, the robots must operate entirely autonomously, without human intervention, and obey California traffic laws while performing maneuvers such as merging into moving traffic, navigating traffic circles, and avoiding moving obstacles. Dr. Tether noted, “The vehicles must perform as well as someone with a California Driver’s License.”

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DARPA conducted competitive site visits across the United States to select the semi-finalists. Dr. Tether told attendees at DARPATech that he was at a site visit and was surprised how well the team's autonomous vehicle made it through an intersection with other cars, just as if there was a human driver in the vehicle. "The depth and quality of this year's field of competitors is a testimony to how far the technology has advanced since the first Grand Challenge in 2004. DARPA thanks all the contestants for their hard work and dedication and congratulates the teams selected as semi-finalists," Dr. Tether said.

The DARPA Urban Challenge is the third in a series of competitions DARPA has held to foster the development of autonomous robotic ground vehicle technology to save lives on the battlefield. Safe operation in traffic is essential to U.S. military plans to use autonomous ground vehicles to conduct important missions. DARPA will award cash prizes to the top three finishers that complete the course within the six-hour time limit.

The semi-finalist teams selected to participate in the NQE are listed below. DARPA will announce the participants in the main event at the conclusion of the NQE.

Austin Robot Technology	Austin, Texas
AvantGuardium	Bethesda, Maryland
Axion Racing	Westlake Village, California
Ben Franklin Racing Team	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
CarOLO	New York, New York
Gator Nation	Gainesville, Florida
Golem Group	Santa Monica, California
Insight Racing	Cary, North Carolina
Intelligent Vehicle Systems	Dearborn, Michigan
MIT	Cambridge, Massachusetts
Mojavaton	Grand Junction, Colorado
Ody-Era	Kokomo, Indiana
OSU-ACT	Columbus, Ohio
Princeton University	Princeton, New Jersey
SciAutonics/Auburn Engineering	Thousand Oaks, California
Stanford Racing Team	Stanford, California
Sting Racing	Atlanta, Georgia
Tartan Racing	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Team AnnieWay	Palo Alto, California
Team Autonomous Solutions	Petersboro, Utah
Team Berlin	Houston, Texas
Team CajunBot	Lafayette, Louisiana
Team Caltech	Pasadena, California
Team Case	Cleveland, Ohio
Team Cornell	Ithaca, New York
Team Cybernet	Ann Arbor, Michigan
Team Gray	Metairie, Louisiana
Team Jefferson	Crozet, Virginia
Team Juggernaut	Sandy, Utah
Team-LUX	Woodstock, Maryland

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Team Oshkosh Truck	Oshkosh, Wisconsin
Team UCF	Orlando, Florida
Team Urbanator	Littleton, Colorado
University of Utah	Salt Lake City, Utah
UU	Westminster, Maryland
VictorTango	Blacksburg, Virginia

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ABOUT DARPA

DARPA is the central research and development organization for the Department of Defense (DoD). The Agency manages and directs basic and applied research and development projects for DoD and pursues research and technology that provide dramatic advances in support of military missions.