



Harnessing American Ingenuity

News Release

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

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DARPA Announces Third Grand Challenge Urban Challenge Moves to the City

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) today announced plans to hold its third Grand Challenge competition on November 3, 2007.

The DARPA Urban Challenge will feature autonomous ground vehicles executing simulated military supply missions safely and effectively in a mock urban area. Safe operation in traffic is essential to U.S. military plans to use autonomous ground vehicles to conduct important missions.

DARPA will award prizes for the top three autonomous ground vehicles that compete in a final event where they must safely complete a 60-mile urban area course in fewer than six hours. First prize is \$2 million, second prize is \$500,000 and third prize is \$250,000. To succeed, vehicles must autonomously obey traffic laws while merging into moving traffic, navigating traffic circles, negotiating busy intersections and avoiding obstacles.

“Grand Challenge 2005 proved that autonomous ground vehicles can travel significant distances and reach their destination, just as you or I would drive from one city to the next,” said DARPA Director Dr. Tony Tether. “After the success of this event, we believe the robotics community is ready to tackle vehicle operation inside city limits.”

To accelerate development of the autonomous ground vehicle technologies required for urban operations and to ensure the widest possible participation, DARPA announced two ways for teams to qualify and compete in the Urban Challenge.

One way involves teams submitting a detailed proposal for up to \$1 million of technology development funds in response to a DARPA solicitation. The Government will obtain limited license rights to technologies developed using this funding. Applicants that do not submit a proposal or who are not selected to receive development funds may still compete in the Urban Challenge using the second track.

The second track is similar to that used for Grand Challenge 2005: teams will submit applications and participate in a series of qualification activities. Each team that participates as a

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semi-finalist in the National Qualification Event (NQE) will be awarded \$50,000. Each team that is successful at NQE will receive \$100,000 and compete in the Urban Challenge final event.

Participants from both tracks will come together at the NQE and progress on to the Urban Challenge final event, where the selected teams will compete for the top three prizes.

DARPA will hold an Urban Challenge Participants Conference, May 20, 2006, in Reston, Va. At the conference, DARPA will review all aspects of the program, including application and proposal processes, schedule, rules, and technical goals. Conference information and details on the planned conference webcast are available at www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge. The conference is open to media.

Details on how to compete for development funding are available in the Urban Challenge solicitation and proposer information pamphlet, available at <http://www.fbo.gov/spg/ODA/DARPA/CMO/BAA06%2D36/Attachments.html>. The DARPA Grand Challenge web site (www.darpa.mil/grandchallenge) is the primary resource for information about the Urban Challenge event and includes frequently asked questions, eligibility information and links to the solicitation.

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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. Congress has authorized DARPA to award cash prizes as a means of recognizing outstanding achievements in Defense-related research and development.

ABOUT THE DARPA GRAND CHALLENGE

DARPA has sponsored two previous Grand Challenge competitions. The first was held in March 2004 and featured a 142-mile desert course. Fifteen autonomous ground vehicles attempted the course and no vehicle finished. In the 2005 Grand Challenge, four autonomous vehicles successfully completed a 132-mile desert route under the required 10-hour limit, and DARPA awarded a \$2 million prize to "Stanley" from Stanford University. The November 2007 Urban Challenge will feature autonomous ground vehicles executing simulated military supply missions safely and effectively while in a mock city environment, merging into moving traffic, navigating traffic circles, negotiating busy intersections and avoiding obstacles.