



Harnessing American Ingenuity

News Release

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

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ROBOTS CONQUER DARPA *Grand Challenge* ***\$2 Million Prize Will be Awarded Sunday***

*Three Autonomous Ground Vehicles Complete 132 Mile Desert Course,
Two More Continue the Route*

Primm, Nevada -- The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) today dramatically accelerated autonomous ground vehicle technologies by demonstrating conclusively that autonomous ground vehicles can travel long distances across difficult terrain at militarily relevant rates of speed. At least three robots successfully completed a grueling 131.2-mile course in the Mojave Desert today, and it remains possible that two others could complete the course Sunday, October 9.

The team whose vehicle is determined to be the winner will receive a check for \$2 million from DARPA, which has been authorized by Congress to fund technology competitions. Director Dr. Tony Tether will present a ceremonial check to the winner at a closing ceremony. Vehicles entered by Stanford University and Carnegie-Mellon successfully completed the course on the opening day; entries by Oshkosh Truck and The Gray Team remain in the running and will complete their runs tonight or tomorrow. The team that completes the course the fastest in under 10 hours will collect the \$2 million prize.

"It's incredible what Stanford and the two Carnegie-Mellon teams did today, and what the other two teams can still achieve," Tether said. "We had anticipated from the beginning that we might have to carry the competition over to a second day."

"When the Wright Brothers flew their little plane, they proved it could be done," Tether continued. "And just as aviation 'took off' after those achievements, so will the very exciting and promising robotics technologies displayed here today."

The finishing vehicles are among 23 finalists that set out on the desert course this morning at 6:30 a.m. PDT.

"We established the *Grand Challenge* program to help foster the development of autonomous vehicle technology that will some day help save the lives of Americans who are protecting our country

(more)

on the battlefield,” said DARPA *Grand Challenge* Program Manager Ron Kurjanowicz. “The outcome of this great public event demonstrates that we have succeeded in our mission.”

More information about the DARPA *Grand Challenge* final event is available at the event website, www.grandchallenge.org.

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DARPA is the central research and development organization for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). The agency manages research and development projects for the DoD and pursues research in technology areas where the risk can be very high, but success provides dramatic capability advances for the DoD.