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News Release

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TOP THREE ALTERNATE TEAMS INVITED TO COMPETE IN DARPA *GRAND CHALLENGE*

Austin Robot Technology, Princeton University, and Team Underdawg Invited to National Qualification Event

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) announced today that the top three alternate teams have been invited to the Grand Challenge 2005 National Qualification Event (NQE) to be held September 28 to October 6, 2005, at the California Speedway, Fontana, California.

The teams are Austin Robot Technology, Austin, Texas; Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey; and Team Underdawg, San Jose, California.

On July 5, 2005, DARPA announced nine alternate teams were selected to ensure a full field of competitors for the NQE and stated it would use site visits to rank those teams. During the week of August 15, DARPA officials visited the alternate teams to view the vehicles and assess their performance on a standardized test course.

As a result of the strong performances at the site visits, DARPA invited three teams to attend the NQE as semi-finalists. Forty-three teams are now invited to compete at the NQE, 20 of which will advance from the NQE to the final Grand Challenge Event on October 8.

DARPA Director Tony Tether congratulated the nine teams for their dedication and hard work. "We are deeply gratified by the extraordinary enthusiasm, resourcefulness, and ingenuity of the new robotics community that has sprung up around the country as a result of the Grand Challenge," he said.

Grand Challenge Program Manager Ron Kurjanowicz added, "The quality and competitiveness of the teams are further evidence of the significant technological progress that has been made since the Grand Challenge 2004. We look forward to an exciting semi-final and expect a hotly contested final event."

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The DARPA Grand Challenge is a field test of robotic ground vehicles for the purpose of advancing autonomous vehicle technology. The event will be held in the desert in the southwestern United States on October 8, 2005. The route will not be announced until 2 hours before the field test begins. The vehicles must travel approximately 150 miles over rugged desert roads using only onboard sensors and navigation equipment to find and follow the route and avoid obstacles. DARPA will award \$2 million to the team whose autonomous vehicle successfully completes the 2005 route the fastest within a 10-hour period. All vehicles are developed without Government funding.

Detailed information about the DARPA Grand Challenge is available at www.darpa.mil/GrandChallenge.

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