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Insight Racing Earns Berth in Finals of \$2 Million Robot Race



Triangle based, Insight Racing Team advanced as a finalist in the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Grand Challenge Race. The race posting a \$2 Million winner-takes-all prize, will pit full sized driverless autonomous vehicles against each other in a 150+ mile race across rugged desert terrain in the southwestern United States this Saturday, October 8th. Insight Racing

earned a spot in the finals during a week long set of grueling elimination rounds held in California, from which DARPA whittled the field of 43 semi-finalists to the 23 best who will run on the Mojave Desert this weekend. Insight Racing is the only team from the Carolina's eligible to compete.

Driven by a Congressional mandate to convert one-third of the military vehicles to driverless computer-driven mode by 2015, the Department of Defense who authorizes and runs the event, believes the future holds great promise for autonomous vehicles to perform missions that put our men and women in uniform at risk. The inaugural DARPA Grand Challenge in 2004 featured 15 teams that navigated a 142-mile course through the Mojave Desert. Although none of the vehicles completed the course, the excitement and momentum generated by this first field test encouraged DARPA to plan a second event, scheduled for October 8, 2005. In addition, the prize has been doubled from \$1 million to \$2 million for the vehicle that completes the course the fastest within a 10 hour time period. The field was narrowed down to 23 participants from almost 200 entrants.

Grayson Randall, Insight Racing founder stated "The development of robotics technology will allow us to accomplish both human relief and military missions that pose a threat to our country's personnel. We are thrilled to compete in this innovative race which is moving autonomous driving ahead so rapidly."

Randall went on to say "We have a highly-talented dynamic team that is comprised of students from North Carolina State University, members of the Triangle technical community and retired business executives." He describes team members as "creative, highly motivated and passionate."

According to Walt Sliva, Business Manager for Insight, "Since 2003, Insight Racing has been hard at work designing a full-sized, robust, cost-effective vehicle that can travel with no human assistance over the course's rugged terrain. The sensors on the 1987 Chevrolet Suburban permit it to drive unknown terrain, regulate its speed, and avoid obstacles just like a human driver."

Insight Racing is a finalist for the second year in a row. However, last year they were unable to compete due to lack of funding. This year they were able to develop a number of sponsors who made participation possible and whose logos cover the vehicle, affectionately called the "Desert Rat." Sponsors are: NC State University, IBM, SAS, Red Hat, Ascot Technologies, BDMICRO, Comtrol, Council & Sons Repair Service, Crossbow, Frantz Automotive, Lord Corporation, PC MedEvac, SICK, and Smith Anderson.

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About Insight Racing: The Insight Racing Team is a cooperative venture between North Carolina State University and Insight Technologies, Inc., a company formed in 2003 to develop autonomous robotics solutions. Based in Cary, NC Insight Technologies brings together the best hardware and software into a cost effective integrated package for assistive and autonomous vehicle operation. Earlier this year, Insight Racing's vehicle was the first entered in this event to successfully complete a rugged 2.7 mile course at Virginia international Raceway in a fully autonomous mode.

About the DARPA Grand Challenge: The DARPA Grand Challenge race has captured international attention because its full size driverless vehicle race stretches the limits of current technology know-how. Detailed information can be found at www.grandchallenge.org.

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