DoD Announces Venue for Wearable Power Competition

The Department of Defense announced today the inaugural $1.75 million Wearable Power Prize competition will be held at the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC), Twentynine Palms, Calif., Sept.22 until Oct. 4, 2008.

The Wearable Power Prize Competition was first announced in Jul. 2007. Its 13-day capstone event culminates on Oct 4 at MCAGCC with a "Power Wear Off" competition. The Wearable Power Prize competition gathers and tests wearable power-generating methods and techniques. The goal is to reduce the weight of power systems that warfighters carry to operate their radios, navigation, weapons, and other gear. Competitors will demonstrate wearable systems that can power military equipment for 96 hours, but that weigh less than half the current battery load.

Finalists, whose entries must produce power on test stands continuously for 88 hours, will wear their power systems in field conditions, testing their ability to work when in motion and exposed to weather.

The first-place team meeting the required energy requirements will win $1 million for building the lightest weight system that generates 20 watts average power for 96 hours (including the "wear-off"). The second-place team will win $500,000 and the third place team, $250,000. A total of 169 teams have registered for the competition.

The "Wearable Power" prize competition is sponsored by the director, Defense Research and Engineering. William S. Rees Jr., deputy under secretary of defense for Laboratories and Basic Sciences is responsible for overseeing the competition.

"We are pleased to host this competition because it directly addresses one of the real, growing problems of our ground warriors," said Brig. Gen. Melvin Spiese, Commanding General, MCAGCC.

"This competition focuses the ingenuity and creativity of inventors, scientists, engineers, and students on finding the best, light-weight, wearable power systems," says Rees. "It makes sense to compete at Twentynine Palms, a place that replicates many of the real-life conditions our warfighters face everyday. I thank Gen. Spiese and his leadership team for recognizing the value of this competition and helping us move it forward. We are eagerly looking forward to this exciting and successful event."

On the final day of the competition, the top three competitors that demonstrate a complete, wearable system that produces 20 watts average power for 96 hours and weighs less than 4 kilograms (~8.8 lbs) will be determined.

Source: http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=11594