

--For Immediate Release--

## Optech Joins in the DARPA Grand Challenge 2005

**Toronto, Ontario, February 1, 2005** – Optech Incorporated, the global leader in the development and manufacture of laser-based survey instruments, has teamed with Team Mojavaton to introduce truly advanced lidar imaging techniques to the DARPA Grand Challenge 2005.

The DARPA Grand Challenge is a competition and field test over rugged desert terrain, to accelerate research and development in autonomous robotic ground vehicles. Optech’s ILRIS-3D Intelligent Laser Ranging and Imaging System is being incorporated as a key component in the sensor array of Team Mojavaton’s 2005 entry, a Nissan Xterra (dubbed the “Xboxx”) autonomous vehicle. No remote control is permitted. Once the vehicles leave the starting line, they must rely exclusively on their on-board sensors, navigation instruments, and computers to “see” the terrain ahead and follow the course to the finish line 150 miles away.



ILRIS-3D mounted on top of the “Xboxx” Nissan Xterra

“This capability of true three-dimensional imaging and the associated artificial intelligence which must be employed to interpret the data will undoubtedly provide a strategic advantage over previous imaging strategies,” said Brent Gelhar, Director, Laser Imaging Division for Optech. “This will not merely be a reactive collision avoidance system, it is an active spatial recognition tool.”

The knowledge gained through this exercise will further drive the understanding and deployment of autonomous vehicle sensor subsystems for Optech’s already proven leadership in lidar technologies.

“We are very fortunate to have Optech as a partner in this event,” said Jim Crittenden, Team Mojavaton’s team leader. “Their experience and the quality of their equipment is unsurpassed and both will be a tremendous advantage in this exciting project. They are clearly at the leading edge of this technology.”

At the first DARPA Grand Challenge, held in March 2004, 15 vehicles operating autonomously attempted a 142-mile route through the Mojave Desert. Since no vehicle was able to complete the route, DARPA is hosting this second Grand Challenge event. None of these vehicles completed the course, so the \$1,000,000 went unclaimed. The second Grand Challenge will take place on Saturday, October 9, 2005. The location has only been announced as “somewhere in the California/Nevada desert area.” The prize for the fastest vehicle to complete the course in less than 10 hours will be \$2,000,000 this time.

