



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2013

Contact: Joan LaRocca
(202) 307-0703
www.ojp.gov

The National Institute of Justice Announces Winner of Body Armor Challenge *More NIJ Challenges are Underway*

WASHINGTON - The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) today announced that a team from Purdue University's school of Aeronautics and Astronautics Engineering won the first public competition challenge offered by the U.S. Department of Justice. The team received a \$25,000 prize for proposing a concept for testing the viability of in-service body armor called the Vibration Energy Signature Test (VEST). While very promising, this methodology will require further development to determine its ultimate viability.

The *NIJ Body Armor Challenge* sought viable solutions to determine whether individual in-service body armor has maintained an acceptable level of ballistic performance during its service life and in a manner that does not render it unfit for continued use. NIJ-funded body armor research began in 1971. Introduced in 1975 as the result of NIJ-funded research, modern police body armor is credited with saving more than 3,100 officers' lives.

"Challenge competitions are a novel way to seek the best and brightest ideas from the field," said Dr. Greg Ridgeway, NIJ's Acting Director. "Because the winning proposal came from an aeronautics team, this first competition demonstrated that the challenge innovative approach draws out fresh ideas from disciplines outside of the traditional criminal justice research community."

In addition to the winner, honorable mentions include teams from the Department of Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management at Iowa State University; Southeast Efficiency Improvement Associates in South Carolina; and the Center of Integrated Nanotechnologies and the Earth and Environmental Sciences Division at Los Alamos National Laboratory, New Mexico.

This body armor competition is the first Challenge at the U.S. Department of Justice and more are underway at NIJ. Three additional Challenges spanning the topics of the efficacy of sex offender registration and notification legislation, ultra-high speed apps, and mission critical voice communications have been posted at www.nij.gov/nij/funding/current.htm. Background information about the *NIJ Body Armor Challenge* including criteria used in judging the applications is posted at www.nij.gov/funding/2012/body-armor-challenge.htm#winner.

###

The Office of Justice Programs, headed by Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, provides federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice and assist victims. OJP has six components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime and the Office of Sex Offender

Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at www.ojp.gov