

Precarn Announces Nearly \$1 Million In New Funding To Help Safeguard Canada's Coastline From Threats, Intruders and Disasters

Ottawa, Ontario – November 1, 2005 – Ottawa-based **Precarn Incorporated**, a not-for-profit national consortium of corporations, research institutes and government partners supporting the development of robotics and intelligent systems (IS), has announced nearly \$1 million in new funding for a Canadian intelligent system project that aims to improve national security by enhancing coastal surveillance technologies.

The funding is part of nearly \$1.5 million that is being provided by Precarn for projects in the information and communications technologies sectors, including the creation of a self-contained, mobile inspection 'robot' for Canada's aging water pipelines. The surveillance project will support the development of intelligent tools designed to speed the process of collecting and analysing images collected by surveillance technologies, in order to help pinpoint coastal threats earlier or deliver quicker relief to disaster situations.

"Precarn is committed to advancing collaborative research efforts in the information and communications technologies sector," said Precarn President and CEO Paul Johnston in announcing the project. "Our support goes beyond funding, to providing a network that promotes and sustains successful partnerships between industry, research and government that ultimately lead to ground-breaking developments."

The surveillance project is being led by **MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates Inc.** of **Richmond, B.C.**, and includes partners **Actenum Corp.** of **Vancouver**; **Defense R&D Canada** of **Valcartier, Que.**; **Simon Fraser University** in **Burnaby, B.C.**; and, **University of Calgary**. Together, they are building intelligent surveillance tools that are capable of processing the information they collect onboard before sending it to a central command centre for further processing.

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According to Project Manager Harold Zwick, the problem is that current surveillance techniques, such as patrol vessels at sea, patrol aircraft and satellites, are designed to examine large areas, and the huge amount of data they generate is difficult to transmit since it is largely made up of images that require high bandwidth. Building intelligence into the surveillance tools themselves enables rapid extraction of relevant information, explains Zwick. Since there's less information to send, it's therefore easier to generate a global view of a target area based on data collected from multiple resources, and to then share that view between systems for heightened accuracy.

While the project team will be working with a fictitious coastal region and fictitious targets (similar to playing a computer game), the potential application of its efforts is widespread and includes assisting in search and rescue attempts as well as providing security for major events, such as the Olympics. In addition to enabling information-rich, low-volume communications between surveillance systems, the team will also provide an innovative scheduling tool to help integrate and analyse information as it is received from multiple surveillance sensors and platforms.

Precarn's portion of the funding represents nearly one-third of the total partner investment in the project, which amounts to more than \$2.2 million. The project is scheduled for completion by December 2007.

About Precarn Inc.

Precarn funds, co-ordinates and promotes collaborative research and development projects in intelligent systems, which is a subset of the information and communications technologies sector. These collaborative projects include academic researchers, business, and government labs, and are designed to improve the productivity and competitiveness of Canadian business. The network also aims to help develop and retain top-notch experts and students in the field. Precarn is supported by Industry Canada, other federal departments and provincial government agencies.

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Media Information:

Gail Bergman or Deena Nathanson
Tel: (905) 886-1340 or (905) 886-3345
Email: gbergman@gailbergmanpr.com