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DOT Seeks Innovative Research Proposals from Small Business

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) today announced that it will make available \$3.5 million in funding for innovative research that will help to enhance the safety and efficiency of the U.S. transportation system, and asked small businesses to submit their project ideas.

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program encourages small business to engage in research and development activities that have the potential to produce commercially viable applications as well as meet federal research objectives. The program is administered by the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, a part of DOT's newly created Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA).

"We're looking for good transportation ideas with the potential to become great transportation breakthroughs," U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta said.

DOT is one of 11 federal agencies that provides research and development funds to the entrepreneurial sector for innovative proposals. Although small businesses are a frequent source of innovation, many lack funds to support their research. The SBIR awards help fund the research through the start-up and development stage, and also encourage commercialization of the resulting products.

Proposals from U.S.-owned businesses of no more than 500 employees are due by May 16, 2005. Research awards will be made in October. Solicitation materials can be downloaded online from <http://www.volpe.dot.gov/sbir/sol05/download.html>.

The goals of DOT's SBIR program are to build a stronger economic base for the United States through invigorating the small business technology community; and to assure that technologies that develop out of this unique program will focus on safer, simpler transportation solutions.

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RITA, a new operating administration within the Department, is responsible for carrying out Secretary Mineta's goal of applying the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation to federal transportation research. The Volpe Center is a non-profit, fee-for-service organization within RITA that is instrumental in supporting the achievement of this goal.

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