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DOT Seeks Innovative Research Proposals from America's Small Businesses

Companies are now able to compete for close to \$1 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for development of research and technology solutions to transportation challenges facing the nation, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta announced today.

Past grant winners have developed, among other things, innovative technologies including safer emergency exit windows for rail passenger cars, devices used by highway maintenance departments to measure pavement strength and resilience, and an automated system to reduce congestion and manage access on America's highways.

"Although small businesses are a frequent source of technological innovation, many lack the necessary funding to support their research," Secretary Mineta said. "We are looking for small businesses and entrepreneurs across the country who will provide the next transportation technology breakthrough."

The Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) program provides funding to small businesses to develop commercially viable technologies that will meet federal research and development needs. The goal of the program is to ensure that technologies developing out of this unique program will focus on safer, simpler and smarter transportation solutions.

DOT is one of 11 federal agencies that provides research and development funds to the entrepreneurial sector for innovative proposals. The SBIR program provides small businesses with funding through the start-up and development stage of their research and encourages the deployment of the resulting technologies.

Research proposals from U.S.-owned businesses of no more than 500 employees are due by May 2, 2006. Grant awards will be made in October. Solicitation topics and materials can be found and downloaded online at <http://www.volpe.dot.gov/sbir/current.html>.

The SBIR program is administered by the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, a part of DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration.

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