

Tech Center News

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TACOM Grants GDLS Contract For Stryker

The U.S. Army TACOM Contracting Command recently awarded General Dynamics Land Systems (GDLS) a \$228.7 million contract for research, development and testing in preparation for the Stryker Engineering Change Proposal (ECP) upgrade program, said GDLS spokesperson Robin Porter.

The Stryker ECP upgrade program is an engineering-development effort focused on integrating a group of system improvements into a single upgrade program for the Stryker eight-wheeled vehicle, Porter said. The objective of this R&D effort is to prepare Stryker vehicles to accept additional Army-directed requirements in the future without impacting current vehicle performance. Technical upgrades to the Stryker will include improved automotive and electrical power generation, chassis upgrades and improved vehicle network capabilities.

“This award shows the Army’s long-term commitment to improving Stryker capabilities for the warfighter, while ensuring that platforms are able to integrate planned and future upgrades,” said Gordon Stein, vice president for Stryker Brigade Combat Teams at GDLS. “This effort will maintain the Stryker’s position as the Army’s primary medium combat vehicle.”

Work will be performed by existing employees in Sterling Heights. The contract will be completed by November 2018.

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GM, TARDEC Partner to Develop Fuel Cells ‘For the Troops’

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ner to look at emerging technology for fuel cells.”

The military, Rogers said, has the short-term problem of trying to power its current vehicle platforms with hydrogen fuel cells. But in the long term, it is hoped that this technology can be adapted to power all kinds of smaller systems such as remote-controlled robots and the like.

Charles Freese, executive director of GM’s Global Fuel Cell Activities operation, said that GM and TARDEC are now able to share common approaches and common equipment so that both groups can learn together.

The advances in hydrogen fuel cells have been tremendous over the past 10 years, Freese said. If someone tried to start a car powered by these cells a decade ago in the recent cold winter weather, they would have been out of luck.

Not so with the latest tech, Freese said.

“We now have the Chevy Equinox,” Freese said. “We’ve been testing 119 hydrogen fuel-cell-powered Equinoxes since 2007. Some of them have more than 100,000 miles on them and we have data on three million road miles.”

Working with the Army will only help GM’s efforts, Freese said.

Michigan U.S. Sen. Carl Levin said that 20 years ago an engineer told him that engineers consider science and engineering a contact sport.

What he meant, Levin said, was that engineers are people who like to get their hands on things and test them and work them out.

“Engineers like to bounce their ideas off each other,” Levin said. “Some of the greatest advances in science have come from putting the biggest minds together in a room and letting them bounce

their ideas off each other.”

The CRADA agreement between the Army and GM will allow that very thing to happen, Levin said. And the current CRADA project is the results of efforts that were completed 20 years ago.

The foundation for today’s CRADA projects began when Congress passed laws that set up the framework for CRADA projects in the early 1990s. Before that, each project had to be reviewed by attorneys.

“When TARDEC was first created, it was next door to the GM Tech Center,” Levin said. “But despite this closeness, they were light-years apart. For too long, too many people in Washington, D.C., opposed projects that allowed the government and private industry from working together because it was deemed ‘industrial policy.’”

But, Levin said, this attitude killed the development of impor-

tant technology in the United States. But people have come to realize that developing new technology is too important to let ideological hangups interfere with giving the military the best equipment.

“The military mission is too important and our military lives are too precious to give them anything less than the best,” Levin said.

“All across the world, governments and private companies are working together to build the next Detroit – an engineering and manufacturing center that creates good middle-class jobs. A project like this helps keep Detroit here.

“We don’t know what will happen, but we do know that innovation won’t go forward unless we put our brightest engineering minds together. This is a competition that we can’t afford to lose. It’s for our troops and for our economy.”

Ford Engineers Use New 3D System to Navigate All Plants

Ford engineers now can visit plants around the globe without leaving their desks.

The automaker is piloting new software from Siemens that facilitates virtual navigation within its assembly plants, helping the company improve global collaboration and better share its best practices.

The new IntoSite application in the Tecnomatix portfolio is a cloud-based web application developed using the Google Earth infrastructure, said Ford spokesperson Kristina Adamski.

IntoSite holds a 3D version of assembly plants and allows users to navigate virtually through the plants – down to the workstations – obtaining a better understanding of global processes.

IntoSite was developed by Siemens’ product lifecycle management (PLM) software business unit.

“Under the Ford production system, we are constantly looking for ways to improve stan-

dardization around the globe,” said John Fleming, Ford executive vice president of Global Manufacturing. “The Siemens IntoSite software pilot is helping us explore the realm of possibility for future cross-regional workplace communication.”

At any virtual location, engineers or other team members can add pins – just as they would in Google Maps – and upload content such as videos, documents and images to these pins, Adamski said. This creates a private virtual space where users can easily save and share materials, helping to better communicate within plants and around the world.

“Using a platform that most of the world already is familiar with, Google Earth, we will be able to increase the speed of adoption and implementation for our manufacturing teams around the world,” said Janice Goral, manager, Ford Vehicle Operations Manufacturing Engineering.

“The information then harnessed and transferred would build on our existing efforts to enhance alignment around the globe, and cater to a world where visual communication now can be more effective than email.”

The IntoSite pilot program, which is initially being studied at Ford’s Michigan Assembly Plant in Wayne, is expected to generate additional benefits across Ford and its global manufacturing team:

• Efficiency – IntoSite provides an opportunity to store and access documents pertaining to specific issues in a common place rather than have to access multiple internal systems.

It also streamlines the process for sharing large media files, which often require access to a third-party file sharing program or the use of global shared drives with file size and storage duration limits.

• Globalization – Offering the ability to travel virtually to plants around the world, IntoSite helps to link together locations with real-world views in a shared online space.

• Standardization – A key part of the Ford production system, standardization is expected to improve as a result of IntoSite application’s file-sharing capabilities, which will help to resolve manufacturing issues, establish and share global common processes and resolve inconsistencies.

Siemens developed IntoSite as a way to help manufacturing professionals virtually fly into any factory location around the globe, and explore, align, collaborate and share knowledge, Adamski said. IntoSite provides manufacturers virtual access to plants for manufacturing planning, issue resolution and sharing best practices globally without the need for plant visits.

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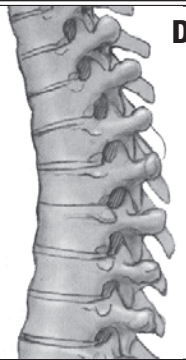
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