

Thales announces winners of Scottish innovative technology competition

Thales UK and Scottish Enterprise today announce the winners of The Thales Scottish Technology Prize for laser technology and applications. The competition, launched in June this year, was open to all students and staff attending Scottish universities and has generated a number of extremely bright and innovative proposals, underlining Scotland's global and historical reputation as a centre of excellence for engineering.

The winner of the £40,000 first prize went to Strathclyde University in Glasgow, for a proposal relating to eye-safe lasers from Dr Walter Lubeigt. Dr Lubeigt also won an individual prize of £2500. Runners-up were teams led by Professor Gerald Buller of Heriot-Watt University and Professor Deepak Uttamchandani, also from Strathclyde University, who won prizes of £1500 and £1000 respectively.

Nicholas Smart, currently studying at Aberdeen University for a BSc in Physics, won the £1000 prize awarded to the best entry from an under-graduate. Nicholas, aged 22, submitted an idea for a co-ordinated positioning and reconnaissance system using lasers.

Eight other finalists from the Universities of Glasgow, Strathclyde and Heriot-Watt each won individual prizes of £500.

David Lockwood, Managing Director of Thales UK's optonics facility in Glasgow, says: "We are extremely proud to have had the opportunity to demonstrate Thales UK's commitment to fostering the spirit of innovation within the Scottish engineering community. This is especially true when considering the scale of our investment in what are undoubtedly difficult economic times. The scope of the competition and its prize fund are truly unique in the history of engineering in Scotland and the results have generated ideas which have an encouraging commercial future."

Jack Perry, chief executive, Scottish Enterprise, comments: "Scottish Enterprise works in partnership with leading-edge companies, such as Thales UK, to help growing businesses go further, faster. The Laser Technology Competition has amply demonstrated the strength of engineering capability in Scotland and shows how we can nurture the innovators and technology entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Some 650 of Thales UK's 9,000 work force are based at the Glasgow site. The company is an important source of high-tech, high-skill employment in the region. The UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) is the main customer for Thales' activities in Glasgow, with the local site being a world leader in night vision technology, delivering equipment and services to the MoD since 1888 when the company was formerly known as Barr & Stroud. In June this year Thales in Glasgow celebrated its 120th anniversary.

Thales UK supports science and technology projects across the country. With a high proportion of our 9,000 staff involved in science, technology and engineering, the themes of technology and education are at the heart of what we do. We believe very strongly that activities such as The Thales Scottish Technology Prize are crucial in raising the profile of engineering in the minds of young people as an exciting career for their future.

Full details of the competition are available at: www.scottishtechnologyprize.com