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TARDEC, NDIA Michigan Chapter Kick Off First-Ever Ground Vehicle Defense Symposium

TROY, Mich. — With a focus on the latest ground vehicle developments for warfighters, the National Defense Industrial Association's (NDIA's) Michigan Chapter kicked off the first-ever Ground Vehicle Systems Engineering and Technology Symposium (GVSETS) today at the Detroit Marriott Troy hotel.

The U.S. Army's Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC) – the Department of Defense's Ground Systems Integrator – is a key participant at the three-day event. The symposium is a unique event that brought together more than 700 people from industry, academia and other government agencies. Together, the ground vehicle community is discussing challenges, collaborating on mutual opportunities and exploring different innovative perspectives on advancing or improving technologies.

“There is nothing in the world like Michigan's depth in industrial manufacturing infrastructure,” said Sen. Carl Levin, who addressed the conference at its opening session. “Out of these meetings will come ideas, relationships, partnerships and products which will contribute to the safety of our men and women in uniform and to the security of this Nation. There is no higher calling than that.”

Main session speaker, TARDEC Director Dr. Grace M. Bochenek, stressed the importance of always being ready for what is next and the importance of collaboration.

“We must rewrite the rules on partnering in order to advance topics that are important to us and this Nation,” Bochenek explained. “We need a common understanding of the challenges at hand. This is an era of persistent conflict, and the enemy is changing at a rapid speed. We have to anticipate, adapt and change faster than they do.”

Other notable quotes from GVSETS Day One include:

- **LTG Stephen M. Speakes** (Deputy Chief of Staff, G-8, U.S. Army): “We are in the business of redefining our future force strategy. We think this is an appropriate response for the environment we are in. We are working on institutionalizing the new army equipment strategy, devising a new approach to system development and balancing requirements and resources. This is a huge challenge and will take lots of commitment from not just the Department of Defense but also the commercial world.”

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Media Advisory



- **Dr. Thomas H. Killion** (Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research and Technology and Army Chief Scientist): “We are investing across a wide range of technologies, many of which you’re going to hear about at this conference. My plea to you is to bring your best ideas and partner with us, because the way we make progress through these areas is through partnerships.”
- **Gary Martin** – Executive Deputy to the Commander, U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command: “Significant developments have occurred in the field of robotics. This capability can take the Soldier out of harm’s way. Robotics is really finding a tremendous amount of capability in theater for a variety of applications that we didn’t envision when we first started working with these types of applications. ... Partnering with industry has been very important in the rapid acquisition process. Rapid acquisition would not be possible without these partners. These are challenges we have to continue to work together on in order to supply the best solutions.”
- **Ed Mazzati** (Director, Accelerated Capabilities Development, Army Research Capabilities and Integration Center at the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command): “There are periods of time when the Army has to stop and think about what has changed and then respond, after thinking about it, with a new concept and come up with new capability requirements. ... All of us sitting in this room who have a responsibility to either write a concept, war game it, experiment with it, analyze it, develop requirements and then ultimately create the actual solutions have to understand the present and future trends in which our Armed Forces have to operate.”
- **Michael David Viggato** (Deputy to the Commander, TACOM Life Cycle Management Command): “We’re providing equipment and providing equipment to make [the Soldier] the most confident so he can do his mission.” ... 16,000 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles fielded in the last two years – phenomenal! That’s almost World War II-type production.”
- **MG Nickolas G. Justice** (Program Executive Officer, Program Executive Office Command Control and Communications Tactical): “What you’re hearing at this conference is a business process change that is being driven because of costs, reductions and lots of capability requirements. We’re going to try to narrow that gap, and we’re going to do that by finding ways to save money and provide structures within our Army to modernize.
- **Marine Corps COL James Braden** (Program Manager, Robotics Systems Joint Project Office): “[At the upcoming Robotics Rodeo in Fort Hood, TX], we’re asking industry and academia to help us push our autonomy as far as we can, so that we can



Media Advisory



test with a level of confidence that says this is good enough for at least an 80 percent solution.”

GVSETS continues a very exciting engineering and technology week for TARDEC. On Monday, TARDEC hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the Department of Defense’s pioneering Ground Systems Power and Energy Laboratory. When completed, the eight-labs-in-one complex will have testing capabilities unlike any other facility in the world and will serve as the cornerstone for the Army’s next generation of advanced ground vehicle power and energy solutions.

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TARDEC is the Nation’s Ground Systems Enterprise to ensure U.S. Soldiers continue to be the best-equipped and most lethal, survivable and sustainable fighting force on Earth. For additional information or to schedule an interview, please contact Bill Dowell at (586) 574-5144, william.dowell2@us.army.mil or wdowell@brtrc.com or John Wray at (248) 310-7231 or jwray@brtrc.com.

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