Ricardo to Develop Fuel Efficient Vehicle for U.S. Army

VAN BUREN TWP., Mich., (Oct 29, 2009) – Ricardo, Inc., the US subsidiary of Ricardo plc, the leading independent provider of technology, product innovation and engineering solutions to the world's automotive, defense, transport and new energy industries, has been awarded a contract for the development of a new vehicle under the Fuel Efficient Ground Vehicle Demonstrator (FED) program launched by TARDEC, the U.S. Army’s Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center in Warren, Michigan.

The FED program, launched in late 2008, has the overarching goals of improving military vehicle technology, reducing fuel consumption on the battlefield, and reducing the nation’s dependence on oil. Ricardo will apply its expertise in the development and manufacture of special vehicles and advanced automotive technology to create a demonstration vehicle that maximizes fuel economy while maintaining the capability and performance of light tactical wheeled vehicles.

“The FED project leverages Ricardo’s experience and success in supporting the development of a broad range of military vehicles over several years”, said Paul Luskin, Ricardo’s chief program engineer for FED and vehicle engineering manager. “In particular, TARDEC has recognized Ricardo’s role on the Future Tactical Truck System (FTTS), in which we successfully implemented advanced technology into an innovative vehicle architecture.”

The new contract award is for the second phase of the program, focusing on the detailed design of a demonstration vehicle. It builds upon the initial phase in which Ricardo applied its Total Vehicle Fuel Economy (TVFE™) systems engineering expertise to evaluate current and emerging technologies that can improve fuel efficiency over the entire vehicle. TVFE focuses on evaluating all vehicle systems to optimize fuel economy and performance. Ricardo’s TVFE modeling and simulation capabilities were used to predict the performance of thousands of combinations of requirements, technologies and architectures. The effort drew upon the company’s full range of automotive systems expertise including compression-ignition engines, hybrid propulsion, transmission and driveline systems, controls and electronics, thermal management, chassis, suspension and structures. Simulation results and innovative systems engineering methodologies were used to develop vehicle
concepts for demonstration. Technologies were selected for their potential both for immediate implementation into the existing fleets of military vehicles, and for improvement of the next generation of vehicles under development.

The FED program will involve close cooperation between Ricardo and TARDEC, as Luskin explains: “Our objectives include not only training embedded government engineers in order to enhance TARDEC’s vehicle engineering capability, but also educating government staff on the issues relating to fuel economy, including implementation of technology and trade-offs in performance requirements.” The project will ultimately produce a demonstration vehicle for testing at the U.S. Army’s Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Commenting on this key contract award, Louis Infante, Ricardo’s Vehicle Product Group Director said: “We are extremely pleased to be able to continue supporting TARDEC in its objective to increase the fuel efficiency of its vehicle fleets. The FED project represents an ideal application of Ricardo’s expertise in armored vehicle design and fuel efficiency improvements using our Total Vehicle Fuel Economy processes. We look forward to working with the government in developing a vehicle that will represent a large step forward in reducing life-cycle cost.”

About Ricardo

Ricardo, the Eco-Innovation Technology Company, is a leading independent provider of technology, product innovation, engineering solutions and strategic consulting to the world’s automotive, military, transport and new energy industries. The company’s skill base represents the state-of-the-art in low emissions and fuel-efficient powertrain technology, and can be best summarized: “Ricardo is Fuel Economy.” Ricardo offers TVFE™, its Total Vehicle Fuel Economy engineering service, to transportation manufacturers and related government agencies worldwide to provide objective evaluation of all available technologies to identify the most cost-effective strategies to accomplish fuel economy and CO2 goals.

With technical centers and offices throughout Europe, the U.S. and Asia, Ricardo provides engineering expertise ranging from vehicle systems integration, controls & electronics, hardware and software development, to the latest driveline and transmission systems and gasoline, diesel, hybrid and fuel cell powertrain technologies. Ricardo’s customers include the world’s major automakers and suppliers as well as manufacturers in the military, commercial, off-highway and clean energy sectors. The company also serves in advisory roles to governmental and independent agencies. Ricardo’s U.S. operation, Ricardo, Inc., is headquartered in Van Buren Township, Michigan. Ricardo plc posted
sales of $296.6 million in financial year 2009 and is a constituent of the FTSE TechMark 100 index – a group of innovative technology companies listed on the London Stock Exchange. For more information, visit www.ricardo.com.

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