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Pranalytica wins major contract for development of detection technology and instrumentation for toxic gases

DARPA chooses Pranalytica for major security research grant

SANTA MONICA, Calif., Sept. 21 /PRNewswire/ -- Pranalytica, Inc. today announced that they were awarded a major contract from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) for the development of new technology and instrumentation for the detection of chemical warfare agents (CWAs), toxic industrial chemicals (TICs) and explosives. The multi-million dollar DARPA contract with Pranalytica will be implemented over three phases. The DARPA program is called Laser Photoacoustic Spectroscopy (LPAS) and is managed by LTC John C. Carrano, Ph.D.

Pranalytica, a trace-level gas sensor company, will focus on the incorporation of new generation quantum cascade lasers into Pranalytica's existing technical platform. The company's pioneering work in the area of ultra-low level trace gas detection is built on their proprietary technology for tuning and controlling the wavelength of the high-power carbon dioxide lasers that has enabled them to successfully commercialize sensors for ppt (parts per trillion) level ammonia gas detection in the environmental, semiconductor and medical diagnostic industries. Pranalytica's proprietary algorithms for identifying gases in the presence of other gases, commonly identified as interferences, enables them to achieve both sensitivity and selectivity. This capability provides the end user an instrument that minimizes the possibility of false alarms.

"I am excited that this activity with Pranalytica will provide us with the opportunity to discover unique sensor technologies for meeting the very challenging needs of our armed forces for a sensitive sensor that can be used in the field reliably by soldiers and other personnel," said LTC John Carrano, Ph.D., Program Manager at DARPA. "Development of CWA sensor technologies under the LPAS program will not only provide the needed sensors for the military use, but may also be useful in homeland security."

"This award is a recognition of the importance of the capabilities of the platform technology developed by Pranalytica. Our research should enable us to find better ways of protecting our civilian and military personnel from the dangers of CWAs, including nerve gases," said C. Kumar N. Patel, Ph.D., President and CEO of Pranalytica. "The events of September 11, 2001 further highlighted our need to protect ourselves from similar terrorist acts. What is needed is highly sensitive instrumentation that is not fooled into giving false alarms arising from many other interfering gases that are present in both urban as well as military field environments."

The contract is worth up to approximately \$13.2M over four years. The program objective is to produce a man portable instrument that maximizes the sensitivity for the detection of lethal and harmful gases with acceptably low probability of false indications that may arise from relatively harmless gases present in the environment. Pranalytica will be working with several sub-contractors including Professor Razeghi, Director of the Center for Quantum Devices at Northwestern University, Newport Corporation of Irvine, CA, HRL Laboratories LLC of Malibu, CA and the Advanced Engineering and Sciences Division of ITT Industries.

About Pranalytica

Pranalytica, Inc. is a privately-held company located in Santa Monica, CA and has received additional government grants from USDA to develop a ruggedized ammonia sensor specifically suited for agricultural applications. Pranalytica's commercial sensors include instrumentation for the ppb level detection of several gases including ammonia, 1,3-butadiene, dimethyl formamide, sulfur hexafluoride, benzene, ethylene, toluene and xylene. For further information visit <http://www.pranalytica.com>