

Autonomous Snowplow Competition



**ION North Star Section
Outreach Program**

Autonomous Snowplow Committee



**Competition Kickoff Meeting Presentation
2015 Competition**

14 October 2014

Meeting Agenda

- Introductions
 - Autonomous Snowplow Competition Committee Members
 - 2015 Competitors
- Venue
 - Saint Paul Winter Carnival
 - Student Final Presentations
 - Science Museum of Minnesota
 - Snowfield Surface
- Sponsors
- Preliminary Design Review Discussion
- Team Questions



Contact List

Committee Contacts

Suneel I. Sheikh, Ph.D.

CEO & Chief Research Scientist
ASTER Labs, Inc.
651-484-2084, sheikh@asterlabs.com

Mark Ahlbrecht

Fellow
Honeywell, Inc.
763-957-4322, mark.ahlbrecht@honeywell.com

Vibhor L. Bageshwar, Ph.D.

Senior Research Scientist
Honeywell, Inc.
763-954-6778, vibhor.bageshwar@honeywell.com

Wayne Soehren

Senior Technical Manager
Honeywell, Inc.
763-954-6771, wayne.soehren@honeywell.com

Paul Kline, Ph.D.

Principal Research Scientist
ASTER Labs, Inc.
651-484-2084, paul.kline@asterlabs.com

Kristen Gerzina

Aero/Mechanical Design & Analysis Engineer
Alliant Techsystems
763-744-5553, kristen.gerzina@atk.com

Richard Russell

Senior Research Scientist
Honeywell
763-954-4292, richard.russell@honeywell.com

Curt Albrecht

Scientist II R&D
Honeywell, Inc.
763-954-4078, curt.albrecht@honeywell.com

Thomas Jakel

Satellite Landing Systems Engineer
Honeywell, Inc.
763-957-3891, thomas.jakel@honeywell.com

Kevin Sweeney

Senior Research Scientist
Honeywell, Inc.
763-954-6774, kevin.sweeney2@honeywell.com

Kristen Sheikh

Achievement Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS)
651-484-2086, kristen@bruitdelamode.com

Missy Fisher

Marketing Director
ASTER Labs, Inc.
415-225-8443, missy@asterlabs.com

ION Contacts

Patricia Doherty, Ph.D.

President, The Institute of Navigation
617-552-8767, dohertpd@bc.edu

John Betz, Ph.D.

Satellite Division Chair, The Institute of Navigation
781-271-8755, betz@mitre.org

Lisa Beaty

Executive Director, The Institute of Navigation
703-366-2723, lbeaty@ion.org



2014-2015 Competitors



School Name

Team Name

Case Western Reserve University

“Herr Auto von Snowmower”



Dunwoody College of Technology

“Snow Devils 0101₂”



North Dakota State University

“THUNDAR”
&
“SNOWMENATOR”



University of Calgary

“The Fighting Mongooses”



University of Michigan - Dearborn

“Yeti”
&
“Geili 4.0”



University of Minnesota

“Ground Squirrel”



Miami University

“Red Blade”



Competition Venue

- The Saint Paul Winter Carnival
 - Rice Park, Downtown Saint Paul
 - Gain lots of media attention
 - 350,000 visitors per year
 - 22-25 January 2015
 - 2015 is 129th year anniversary of Carnival
 - Rosanne Bump
 - CEO & President, St. Paul Festival and Heritage Foundation
 - Expect all Competition operations to remain the same and go smoothly



Student Presentation Venue

- This year the Student Final Presentations will be held at:
 - Science Museum of Minnesota
 - 120 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102



**Science
Museum**
of Minnesota®



- In previous years, the Student Final Presentations have also been held at the Landmark Center
 - Nice venue, and can be used as a “warming” facility during the event
- Students are encouraged to visit the Science Museum as an attraction
 - Museum is very close to the Competition site

Competition Time Line

- Sep 2014 – Application Forms Due
(ION National office requests outstanding items to be provided soon)
- Nov 2014 – Competition Preliminary Design Review
(Saturday, 8 November 2014 planned date)
- Dec 2014 – Review status with teams (trip planning, etc.)
- Jan 2015 – Fifth Year of Competition
Final Presentations, Vehicle Qualifications, &
Snowplow Competitions

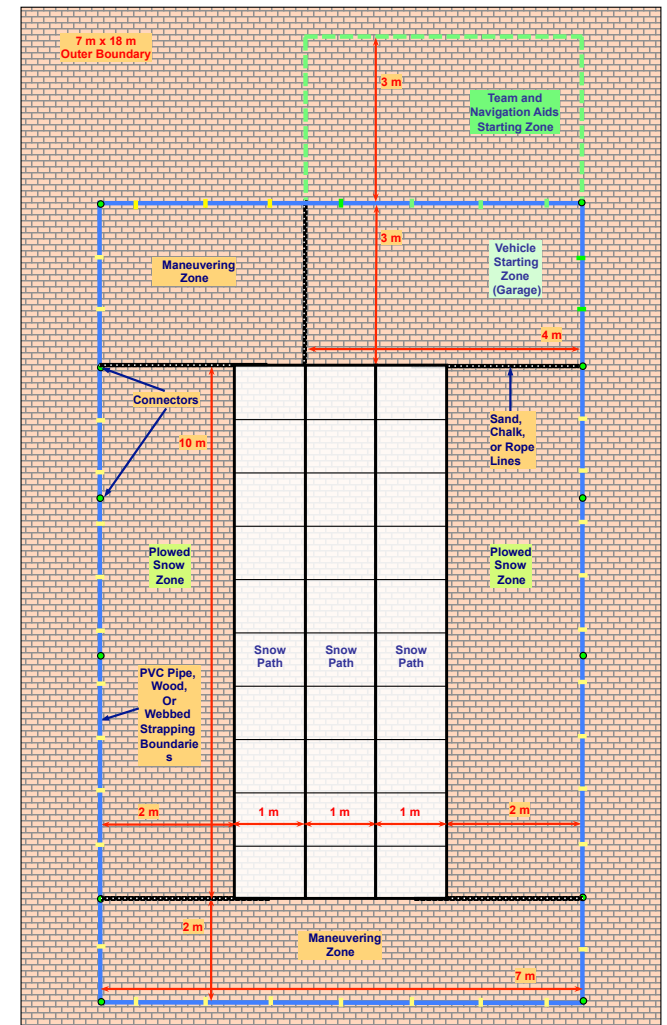
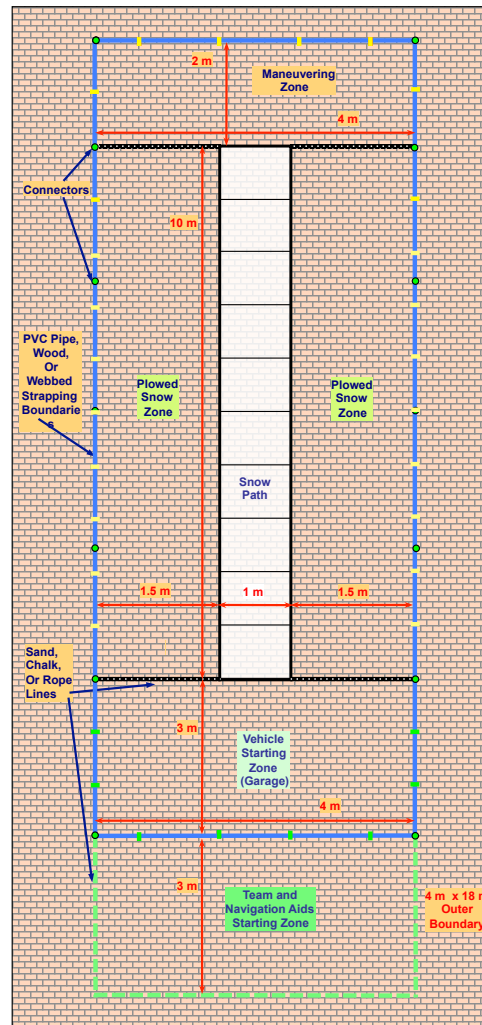
Competition Rules

- Rulebook completed and available to teams
 - www.autosnowplow.com

- Challenging competition
 - Vehicle Garage
 - Team Starting Zone
 - Post within Field

- Two competition snowfields
 - Single Straight "I"
 - Triple Straight "I"

- Single Straight "I"
 - 1-m width path
- Triple Straight "I"
 - Three 1-m width paths



Competition Site

Downtown Saint Paul, MN

Landmark Center

Ice Rink

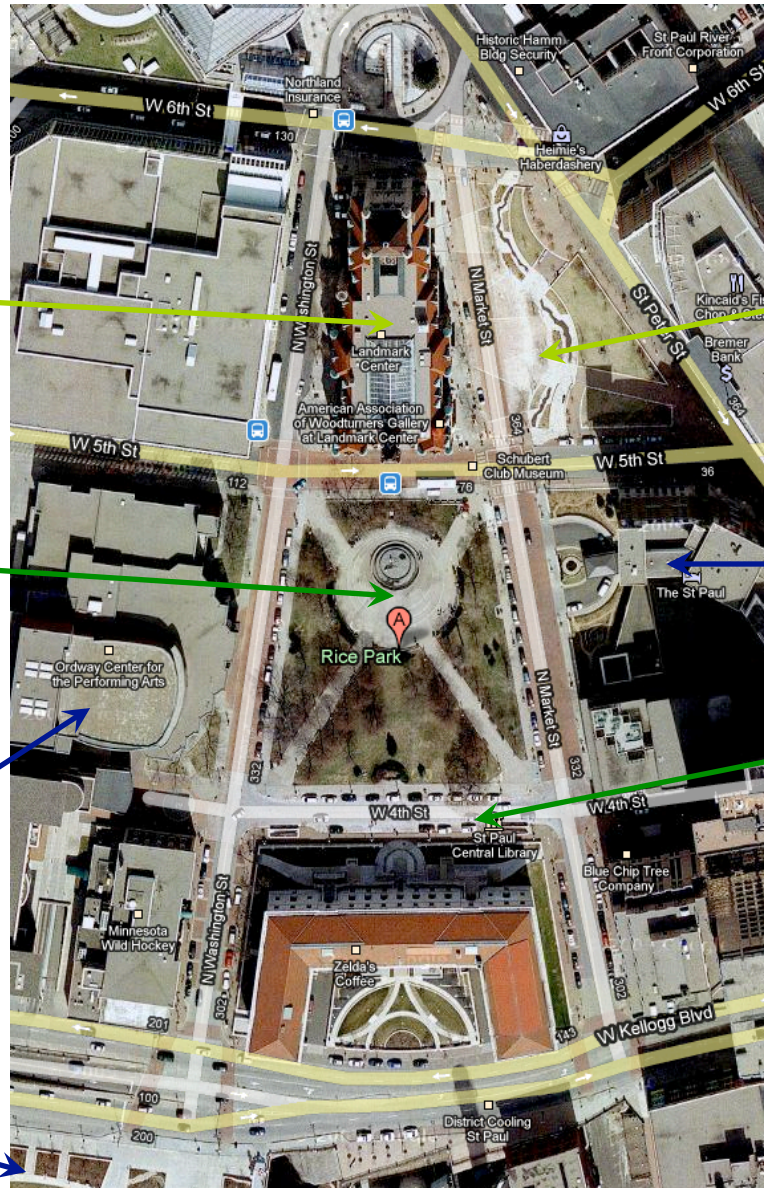
Rice Park

The St Paul Hotel

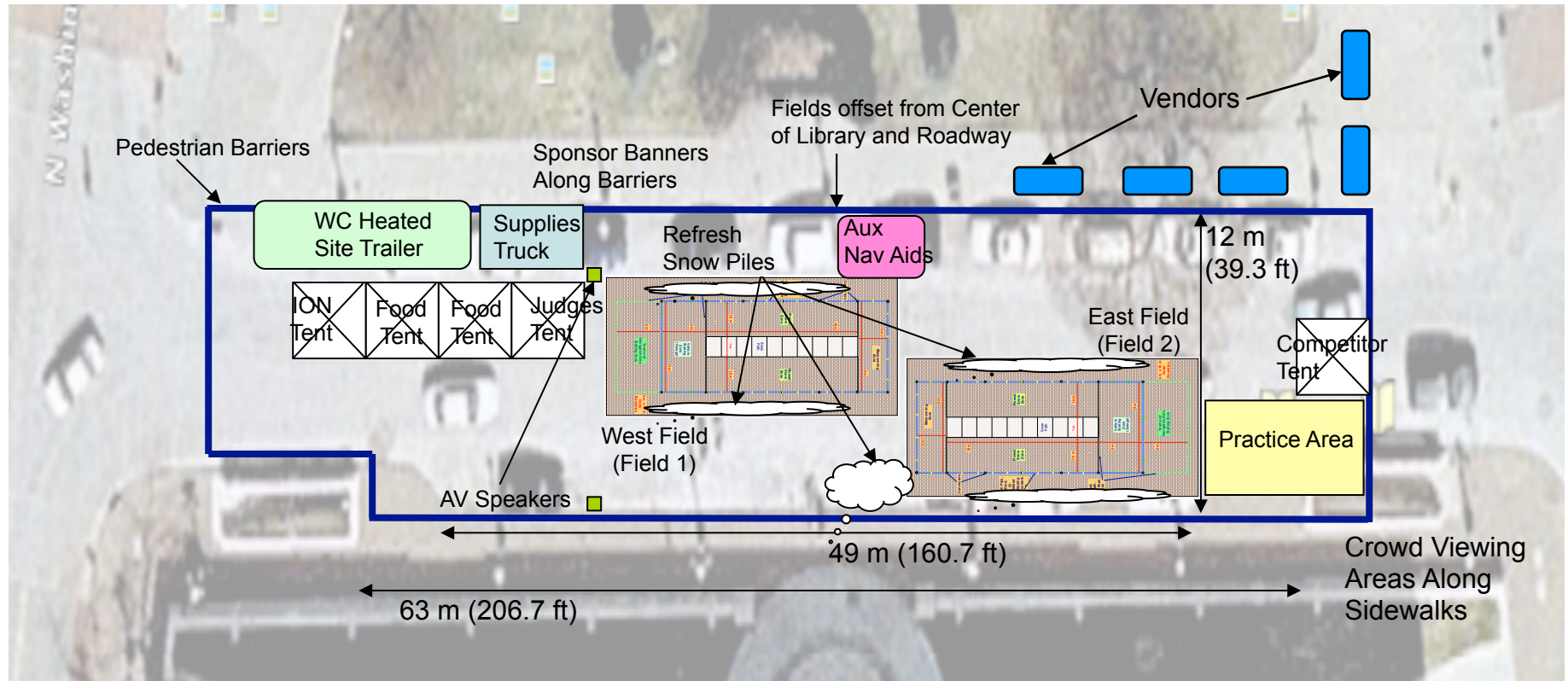
Ordway Center

W 4th Street

Science Museum



Competition Site: Layout



- Competition site: two snowfields set up directly on road, W 4th St, Saint Paul, MN
- Barriers installed to stop crowds from entering competition areas
- Vendors close to draw in viewers
- Viewers can stand and watch all along barriers and steps of Central Library
- Practice area: available for all teams
- Snow filled trucks: for fresh snowfield set up

Fake Snow

- Issue of how to test the vehicles in labs
 - How to test year round and in warm climates?
- Solution: Fake Movie Snow!!
 - Fairly inexpensive and does not melt!
 - Need to compare consistency to real snow
- Real snow used for competition



<http://www.stevespanglerscience.com/product/1262>



<http://www.discoverthis.com/super-snow.html>



<http://www.amazon.com/Be-Amazing-Toys-4100-Blizzard/>

Competition Procedures

- Competition Run and Set up Time
 - Single 20-minute run for each team
 - Teams may set up navigation systems as needed, but set up time is included as part of the 20-minute run
- Variable Snow Depth
 - Snow depth can vary between 5 and 10 cm along the snow path for either snowfield
- No After-Hours Operations within Competition Area
 - Due to insurance and safety, as well as snowfield protection

Competition Procedures

- Competition Zones
 - Vehicle Starting Zone (Garage)
 - Starting position for vehicle
 - Any portion of vehicle must return to garage at end of run, otherwise lose points
 - Team and Navigation Aids Starting Zone
 - All team members must start within this Zone at beginning of run before any navigation aids are placed
 - Maximum of 6 team members allowed for setting up navigation aids
 - Maneuvering Zone
 - Areas for maneuvering vehicle and snow
 - Plowed Snow Zone
 - New area where all snow must be placed
- Fast Completion
 - Extra points for clearing snow from the snow paths in under 20 minutes
- No items can be dropped/expelled from vehicle in any direction
 - No sand, water, fire, etc.
 - Keeps snowfield playing field surface the same for all teams

Changes for 2014

- **Simulated Posts**
 - Simulates a tree or parking meter near or on the snow path
 - One post randomly placed outside of field snow path but within the field boundaries
 - No points lost for hitting this post outside of snow
 - But should be avoided in case it topples over and cause issues
 - One post randomly placed in 1-m² square of snow path
 - Points lost (20%) if vehicle hits, moves, or topples over this post
 - However, snow can “hit” post without losing points
 - Snow “void” surrounding post, so vehicle does not need to plow right against post
 - A competition “obstacle”
- **Presentations and Reports**
 - Judges would like to see new content each year
 - Please don't recycle last year's report or presentation, or judges will deduct points up to 10%
 - Teams will be asked to describe year-over-year changes and their biggest design challenges

Sponsorship

- Current Sponsors

- ION Satellite Division
- Lockheed Martin, Inc.
- ASTER Labs, Inc.
- Honeywell Inc.
- The Toro Company
- Deere and Company
- Space Exploration Technologies Corp.
- Alliant Techsystems, Inc.
- U.S. Bancorp
- Proto Labs, Inc.
- Nuts & Volts, Servo Magazine



- Always looking for additional sponsors & funding!!



Competition Scoring

Category	Scoring (%)
PDR Presentation	5
Final Presentation	10
Final Report	10
Single "I"-Shaped Snow Path	25
Triple "I"-Shaped Snow Path	<u>50</u>
Total Competition Points	100



PDR Presentation

- PDR presentation day: 8 November 2014 (Saturday)
 - Presentation medium: conference call & screen sharing
- PDR presentation slides held in confidence until the end of competition
 - All Team materials may be eventually made public
- PDR presentation slides submission deadline: Final Version
 - 9:00 PM (Central); 6 November 2014 (Thursday)
 - Email submission to Vibhor and Suneel:
vibhor.bageshwar@honeywell.com & sheikh@asterlabs.com
 - Please submit a PDF version of the presentation to minimize file size
 - CD submission (not necessary if you email the presentation slides)

Dr. Vibhor Bageshwar
1985 Douglas Drive
MN10-122B
Golden Valley, MN
55422



Team Questions

- Any Questions?
- General Discussion



Backup Slides



Introduction

- Goal: Design an Engineering-based Outreach student competition
 - Specific to Guidance, Navigation, and Control (GNC) technology
- Modeled after ION Robotic Lawn Mower Competition
 - Complementary competitions
 - Similar vehicles, sensors, and goals
 - Different seasons
- Take a *winter-approach* to the competition
 - Choose snow-blowing/snow-plowing, instead of lawn-mowing,
 - Winter is a potentially a tougher scenario
 - Less fixed visual cues
 - Covered with snow (pure white)
 - Blowing snow (visibility poor)
 - Changing visual cues
 - Snow drifts change from day to day
 - Harsher environment
 - Cold effects sensors performance
 - Reduced lighting
 - Control challenges
 - Must redirect new snow away from old high snow drifts



Motivation

- Public Outreach
 - Significant publicity and visibility of ION and its members to a new area
 - Promote ION's talents and capabilities to large public audience
- Technology Potential
 - Minnesota Department Of Transportation: Snowplow safety systems
 - Minneapolis Airport Commission and FAA: Automated runway clearing
 - University of Minnesota: Driver-assisted bus and Alaskan highway snowplows
- Encourage growth within ION North Star Section
 - Competition provides a large, local project to which members can immediately contribute towards
- Large public venue
 - St. Paul Winter Carnival (January in MN ... refreshing!)
- Encourage participation in all three ION competitions
 - Mini-Urban Challenge : High School-Level students
 - Robotic Lawn Mower : Spring Event, College-Level students
 - Autonomous Snowplow : Winter Event, College-Level students + public
- Encourage industry sponsorship
 - Mentorship and Judging competition opportunities
 - Meet competent, highly-motivated potential employees

Plowing versus Blowing

- **Snow Plow**

- Move snow from one area to another along the ground



Hand Plow



Wheeled Plows



Yuki-Taro Autonomous Snow Plow Robot



RC Plow

- **Snow Blow**

- Eject snow from one area to another through air



Hand-Wheeled Blowers



Heavy Wheeled Blowers