



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONNECT Announces 2009 Otterson Award Recipient

Local Honoree Selected for Development of the Predator and Its Impact on Innovation in San Diego

SAN DIEGO – CONNECT, one of the nation's most successful regional economic development programs for high technology and life science innovators, today announced the Predator, an unmanned aircraft developed and manufactured in San Diego by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI), as the recipient of this year's William W. Otterson Award.

Predator is the most successful unmanned aircraft surveillance program that has ever been made to support all the U.S. armed forces in combat. Predator provides tactical and strategic intelligence to operational commanders worldwide. Predator is the only reconnaissance system available in the U.S. inventory that can provide near real-time video imagery day or night in all weather conditions via satellite worldwide - without exposing pilots to combat fire. In memory of CONNECT's founder and first executive director, Bill Otterson, the Otterson Award recognizes technologies or products developed in San Diego that have demonstrated a significant positive impact on society or on quality of life.

"Just as CONNECT has been a catalyst for revolutionizing the technology and life sciences industries in San Diego, GA-ASI's flagship Predator unmanned aircraft system [UAS] has revolutionized aviation by expanding the capabilities of UAS, making them viable alternatives to manned aircraft for a variety of missions," said Thomas J. Cassidy, Jr., President, Aircraft Systems Group, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. "Predator continues to be the most combat-proven UAS ever produced, providing persistent situational awareness, precision strike, and battlefield support to ground forces in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other world trouble spots over the years. We are honored that CONNECT is recognizing the significant capabilities and accomplishments of this unrivaled aircraft."

The winner will be presented on December 11th at the 22nd Annual Most Innovative New Product (MIP) Awards Luncheon, held at the Hilton La Jolla Torrey Pines, to an audience of more than 800 of San Diego's top executives, entrepreneurs, service providers and academics.

"The development of the Predator and the contributions of General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. are critical to America's leadership in these industries and to our national security," said Duane Roth, CEO of CONNECT. "Predator has had a significant impact on the defense and aerospace cluster while creating countless jobs for San Diegans. This product is a key example of the innovation and creative leadership we have here in San Diego."

The 2009 MIP Awards continue the tradition of showcasing San Diego-based companies with cutting-edge innovation in various arenas of technology. This year, CONNECT will recognize companies in eight categories: action and sports, aerospace and security, cleantech, communications and IT, hardware and general technology, diagnostics and research tools, medical products and software.

For more information about the Predator, please visit
<http://www.ga-asi.com/products/aircraft/predator.php>

To learn more about CONNECT's MIP Awards and to register to attend, please visit
<http://www.connect.org/programs/most-innovative-products-award/join/>

About General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI)

General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc., an affiliate of General Atomics, delivers situational awareness by providing unmanned aircraft, radar, and electro-optic solutions for military and commercial applications worldwide. The company's Aircraft Systems Group is a leading designer and manufacturer of proven, reliable unmanned aircraft systems, including Predator[®] A, Predator B, Sky Warrior[®], and the new Predator C Avenger[®]. It also manufactures a variety of solid-state digital ground control stations (GCSs), including the next-generation Advanced Cockpit GCS, and provides pilot training and support services for UAS field operations. The Reconnaissance Systems Group designs, manufactures, and integrates the Lynx[®] SAR/GMTI radar and sophisticated CLAW[®] sensor control and image analysis software into both manned and unmanned aircraft. It also integrates other sensor and communication equipment into manned ISR aircraft and develops emerging technologies in solid-state lasers, electro-optic sensors, and ultra-wideband data links for government applications. For more information, please visit www.ga-asi.com.

Predator, Sky Warrior, Avenger, Lynx, and CLAW are registered trademarks of General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.

About CONNECT

CONNECT is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining the growth of innovative technology and life science businesses in San Diego. Since 1985, CONNECT has assisted in the formation and development of over 2,000 companies and is widely regarded as the world's most successful regional program linking inventors and entrepreneurs with the resources they need for success. CONNECT focuses on research institution support, business creation and development, entrepreneurial learning, access to capital, public policy advocacy, awards, recognition and networking. More than 25 countries and regions have adopted the CONNECT model, including the U.K, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Australia, and China. For further information, please visit www.connect.org.

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