

NYSEARCH AND DOT/OPS MAKING PROGRESS ON R & D FOR INSPECTION

NYSEARCH has been cofunding several high priority R & D projects with the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS), now PHMSA. Three of those projects are consolidated into one program contract with the objective of improving existing remote inspection techniques as well as developing robotic inspection techniques for lines that are deemed unpiggable or difficult to inspect. The three projects of the Consolidated Program are: 1) Design, Construction and testing of a segmented MFL sensor for use in the inspection of unpiggable pipeline, 2) Design, construction and demonstration of a robotic platform for the inspection of unpiggable pipelines under live conditions, and, 3) Validation and enhancement of long range guided wave ultrasonic testing: A key technology for Direct Assessment of buried pipelines. The Consolidated Program contract was executed in December 2004 and NYSEARCH and its sub-contractors have been working towards program milestones slated for September. In addition to wide member support, NYSEARCH has also obtained cofunding from OTD, PRCI and Southern California Gas Company for two of the three projects.

Several discussions and conference call meetings have been held among subcontractors, cosponsors, the NYSEARCH project managers and OPS program monitors. In early September, Milestone Review meetings are being held in Albany to review the robotic inspection platform design, a new sensor system design for the robotic platform and the enhancements and improved measurement schemes of the TWI/FBS Long Range Guided Ultrasonics (LRUT) technology. In addition, in September, the LRUT is undergoing blind field tests at the new NYSEARCH/NGA test bed in Johnson City, NY. Using this test bed, members can then determine the performance based on various pipe coatings and sizes as well as precise locations of defects, welds, and other pipe appurtenances. The test bed will also accommodate tests for robotic inspection platforms for the 20" and 12" sizes.

For further information on these projects, please contact Daphne D'Zurko or Dr. George Vradis.