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SRNL INVENTION NAMED ONE OF 25 BEST

AIKEN, S.C. (March 30, 2005) – For the second year in a row, an invention from the Savannah River National Laboratory has been named one of the World's Best Technologies. The Plasma Screen Floating Mount, invented by Don Pak and Bob Eakle of SRNL, is one of the featured inventions at the World's Best Technologies for 2005 (WBT05) Showcase in Arlington, Texas, March 29-31. The mount allows large flat-panel display screens to be used in moving vehicles.

The WBT05 is an international showcase for new technologies developed at the nation's top universities, federal labs, federally supported research and development institutions, and private companies. Each year, a seasoned screening panel of investors and commercialization experts selects up to 75 exhibitors that have the greatest potential for high growth commercial enterprises. From that group, the top 25 exhibitors are chosen for special attention. The Plasma Screen Floating Mount was chosen as one of that top 25. World's Best Technologies, produced in cooperation with the Federal Laboratory Consortium for Technology Transfer and the National Association of Seed and Venture Funds, provides an opportunity for investors to gather information on a variety of technologies with global commercialization potential.

Like many SRNL inventions, the Plasma Screen Floating Mount was developed to meet a specific need at the Savannah River Site, but has usefulness far beyond the site's activities.

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Plasma Screen Mount

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Manufacturers typically recommend against mounting large plasma screen displays in environments where shock and vibration occur – like in moving vehicles. Researchers at Savannah River National Laboratory, however, needed to use a 42-inch plasma display screen in a mobile laboratory that performs environmental monitoring and detection activities while traveling. These activities are often conducted while driving over rough terrain or traveling at highway speeds. To solve the problem, Pak and Eakle created a unique mount, which is designed to allow the plasma display to “float” in three dimensions. This floating action eliminates vibration and dampens shock to the display in the event of external impacts such as potholes or rough terrain, and prevents damage to the gas-filled glass platen and other sensitive electronics of the screen.

The working prototype of this patented mount has now been in use in SRNL’s mobile laboratory for two years, providing stable, on-the-scene, interference-free video, computer graphics and scientific modeling displays.

With the increasing popularity of flat panel display technology, this new mounting system could have a wide variety of applications, enabling the use of such display screens in mobile medical labs, military vehicles, mobile command centers, environmental laboratories ... even recreational vehicles.

The Savannah River National Laboratory is the applied research and development laboratory at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site and is operated for the DOE by Westinghouse Savannah River Company.

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