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Research North Dakota Awards Grant to UND Tech Accelerator for $900,000 Turbine Blade Inspection Automation Project

Grand Forks, North Dakota (April 22, 2015): EdgeData, a Grand Forks-based company focused on the capture, compute and consumption of data, has matched a newly approved $450,000 Research ND grant to the University of North Dakota (UND) by the North Dakota Centers of Excellence Commission. The grant will be used for applied research aimed at commercialization of services related to EdgeData's proprietary process for inspecting industrial wind turbine blades with Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). EdgeData has partnered with LM Wind Power, the world's leading independent blade supplier to the wind industry, to perfect and deploy BladeEdge. BladeEdge will automate activities associated with condition assessments and service planning for wind turbine blades; and eliminate the safety risk associated with elevated work for inspections. SmartC2 is a collaborating company in the development of BladeEdge.

Home to one of the six national Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) UAS test sites, North Dakota is an emerging center for UAS innovation. Using UAS rather than human crews for wind turbine inspections is expected to eliminate elevated work safety risk for inspections, recover the wind farm energy-efficiency loss due to blade condition and help address the lifecycle extension of wind-energy infrastructure. Kevan Rusk, the head of the UND Tech Accelerator added "the project will help showcase the advantages of the UAS and renewable energy environments in Grand Forks and all of North Dakota, so that other companies can come here for technology application acceleration."

"Automated condition assessment and integration in our service processes will serve the wind energy industry and its customers with higher efficiencies, lower costs and life extensions," said John Jeno, the Senior Manager for Regional Technology for LM Wind Power. Bill Burga, LM Wind Power's Director of Operations – Americas, observed that "this important applied research is aimed at improving or maintaining the condition of an important part of the wind turbine asset, the blades, and is a tool towards further advancing the wind energy industry. I'm proud that North Dakota is a leader."

"EdgeData is an exciting new venture in our technology ecosystem. We are very excited about the potential of the UAS inspection methodology being pioneered by EdgeData and LM Wind Power at UND," said Bruce Gjovig of the UND Center of Innovation. "EdgeData wants to create value for the North Dakota taxpayer in return for their support." said Greg

Thorsteinson, one of the founders of EdgeData. “This grant will accelerate the process of developing and refining this technology to enhance energy efficiency, protect workers, save money and create value.”

More information about BladeEdge may be found at **www.EdgeData.net**.

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About EdgeData
EdgeData equips businesses in a variety of industries to capture and use “big data” intelligence to grow profits and market share, ensure compliance, hone competitive advantage and make data-driven decisions. EdgeData serves the wind energy market with BladeEdge, a next-generation equipment reliability and lifecycle management services suite.

About LM Wind Power
LM Wind Power is the world's leading component supplier to the wind industry, providing blades, service and logistics. Rotor solutions are supplied to 30 global and national wind turbine manufacturers. Since 1978, LM Wind Power has produced more than 175,000 blades corresponding to a capacity of approximately 65 GW – each year contributing to saving nature more than 120 million tons of CO^2. The Company has nearly 5,000 employees and 13 manufacturing facilities on four continents. More information at www.LMWindPower.com.

About the UND Tech Accelerator
The UND Tech Accelerator (located on UND’s campus) was formed to assist the University of North Dakota to advance its research agenda, to commercialize its University innovations and discoveries, and to create economic opportunities for Grand Forks and the State of North Dakota.

About SmartC2
EdgeData has involved another North Dakota company, SmartC2, to integrate flight information with the business workflow data. SmartC2 is a North Dakota based company that provides “end to end” business management for the aviation industry. More information at www.SmartC2.com.

About Research ND
Administered by the North Dakota Centers of Excellence Commission, the overall goal of Research ND, Research ND BIO, FAST Track and the Venture Grant programs is to have a long-term positive economic impact on the state and private sectors through various means including, but not limited to, economic diversification, improved production factors and the development of new markets. More information at www.ResearchND.com.