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Touchstone Research Laboratory Nets Major Federal R&D Award
Work recognized for positive economic impacts and business achievement

Washington, D.C. — Touchstone Research Laboratory, Ltd. of Triadelphia, WV, has been selected to receive a prestigious national award recognizing its successful participation in federal research programs that yielded positive economic impacts, business achievement and effective collaborations.

The Tibbetts Awards are bestowed on companies that exemplify excellence in use of Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) programs in development of new products and innovations. Touchstone is the lone West Virginia company to receive the honor which was awarded in ceremonies on October 10 in the Nation's Capital. Touchstone President & COO Brian Joseph was asked to speak at an educational session held in conjunction with the award presentation. Touchstone was one of only four companies asked to present.

The award is named for Roland Tibbetts, the person acknowledged as the father of the SBIR program. Touchstone is one of 55 companies in the U.S. to receive this award and was selected from over 4,000 companies that receive contracts and grants under the SBIR Program each year.

SBIR programs fund research and development efforts of a high risk nature that may have excellent commercial potential. SBIRs were created by an Act of Congress in 1982 and present opportunities for any innovator to conduct research and development that both meet federal needs and stimulate technological innovation while encouraging participation by small companies in the overall research process.

SBIRs are funded by federal agencies with an annual research and development budget in excess of \$100 million including the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, and Energy as well as NASA, the National Science Foundation and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Through SBIR, each agency develops topics and releases solicitations. Proposals are submitted to the agency where they are reviewed and evaluated on a competitive basis. Each agency makes its own awards.

A significant portion of the growth of Touchstone as a leader in technology and innovation has been the result of SBIR-supported technologies. Touchstone identifies new, sought-after technologies to facilitate innovation within the company.

Since 1999, the number of employees has grown from 24 to more than 50, and sales have gone from \$2.6M to more than \$10M, resulting in over \$50 million in sales deriving from these technologies.

The SBIR program is a three-phase process. Phase I is based on proposals solicited by participating agencies and awards can be up to \$100,000. Phase II is for further development of the initial proposal and can be for up to \$750,000. Phase III is conducted by the small business to pursue commercial applications of the R&D conducted in Phases I and II.

Since 1998, Touchstone has won 36 Phase I and 18 Phase II SBIR awards and a number of Phase III awards. The SBIR program has strongly contributed to Touchstone's growth, technology inventions, and solutions for federal agencies.

Touchstone was nominated for the award by the Regional Economic Development Partnership (REDP) in Wheeling. Don Rigby, Executive Director of REDP said, "We have enjoyed a long relationship with Touchstone having built four buildings at the Millennium Centre together. It's great to be part of Touchstone's success."

The complete list of winners can be found at tibbettsawards.org.