



[news & events](#) | [for media](#) | [about us](#) | [la louisiane](#) | [faculty assistance](#) | [logos & licensing](#)

Contact: Christine Payton

(337) 482-6397, payton@louisiana.edu

June 2, 2004

CAJUNBOT MEETS GOV. BLANCO ON CAPITOL STEPS

Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco welcomed UL Lafayette's CajunBot to the Louisiana Capitol and declared Wednesday as "CajunBot Day" throughout the state.

CajunBot, UL Lafayette's entry in the \$1 million U.S. Department of Defense's Grand Challenge this spring, climbed 12 Capitol steps as the governor, legislators and members of the university community watched.

CajunBot's welcome to the State Capitol coincided with annual the UL Lafayette Alumni Association's annual Red & White Day. Members of the Association met with lawmakers to talk about issues that affect the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and higher education.

Blanco said the robot was "an outstanding example of the brainpower we have here in Louisiana and at our universities."

"This is a great Louisiana creation," the governor said. "It represents the ingenuity we are striving for here to retain our brightest minds."

"CajunBot runs on gasoline, but it is fueled by our brainpower."

UL Lafayette's CajunBot was one of the 13 vehicles that competed in the Grand Challenge on March 13. Three of the finalists were developed by other universities: the California Institute of Technology, Carnegie Mellon University and Virginia Tech.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the central research and development agency for the U.S. Department of Defense, created the Grand Challenge to encourage the development of an autonomous ground vehicle capable of navigating on its own. The U.S. Department of Defense has been mandated by the U.S. Congress to have one-third of its ground combat force unmanned by 2015.

In the Grand Challenge in March, unmanned robotic vehicles attempted to travel about 200 miles, from Barstow, Calif., near Los Angeles, to Primm, Nev., near the outskirts of Las Vegas. DARPA offered a \$1 million prize to the team whose vehicle was the first to cross the finish line within 10 hours.

None of the vehicles finished the course. The longest distance traveled by any contestant was 7.4 miles.

Software developed by UL Lafayette interprets Global Positioning System coordinates to plot CajunBot's path. Lasers in the front of the vehicle scan the terrain to detect obstacles. "Skid steering" enables it to change



[Prospective Students](#)

[Current Students](#)

[Alumni, Donors & Friends](#)

[Visitors](#)

[Faculty & Staff](#)

Spring Gala
April 14, 2012

direction. CajunBot's movement can also be controlled remotely via a modified joystick.

UL Lafayette's Team CajunBot is composed of faculty, undergraduates, graduate students, alumni and business partners with expertise in many areas. Dr. Arun Lakhotia, an associate professor in UL Lafayette's Center for Advanced Computer Studies, was Team CajunBot's project leader. Dr. Charles D. Cavanaugh, an assistant professor in CACS, was the technical leader of the team.

A total of 106 teams applied to participate in this year's race. Eighty-six of them submitted required technical papers. If a team's paper was approved, the team was visited by DARPA officials, who then narrowed the field to 25 contestants eligible to participate in a Qualification, Inspection and Demonstration in California. At the completion of the QID, there were 15 finalists; two withdrew at the start of the race.

The next Grand Challenge is tentatively scheduled for November 2005. The prize has doubled to \$2 million. CajunBot has already qualified to participate in that race.

CajunBot's website is <http://www.CajunBot.com>



Document last revised Wednesday, June 2, 2004 4:29 PM

© Copyright 2003 by the [University of Louisiana at Lafayette](http://www.louisiana.edu)
Public Relations and News Services · Martin Hall Room 319
Post Office Box 41009, Lafayette LA 70504-1009, USA
337/482-6397 · 337/482-5908 (fax) · prns@louisiana.edu