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For Immediate Release:

Annual Sea, Air, and Land Challenge to be held at Northpointe
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The Armstrong County Industrial Development Council (ACIDC), owners of the Northpointe Business Park in Armstrong County, will be providing their facilities on Saturday, May 2, 2015 for the 3rd Annual Sea, Air, and Land Challenge. The event, developed by the Penn State Electro-Optics Center, and funded by the Office of Naval Research, is a series of engineering competitions for high school juniors and seniors.

True to the name, the engineering challenges are held in the air, in the "sea" and on the ground. Teams of students work throughout the school year to design and build unmanned vehicles and custom payloads for each challenge. Aerial challenges will be conducted on one of the recently created large development sites, while the sea and land based challenges will be held on courses set up at a multi-tenant building also owned by the ACIDC.

Dennis Smail, Chairman of the ACIDC, said, "The students participating in this event are our future leaders, scientists and business owners; we're happy to help in any way we can." The challenges mirror the types of missions real life department of defense engineers may encounter as they develop technologies to support soldiers and sailors. The goals of the event are to introduce students to the engineering processes used to solve complex engineering challenges, and expose them to the engineering career opportunities available within the department of defense.

Over 150 students from nine (9) local schools, including Freeport High School and Lenape Technical School are expected to compete this year. Lenape Technical School's Administrative Director, Dawn Kocher-Taylor said Lenape's team will compete in all three events. "The challenges presented in this competition provide multiple benefits. First and foremost, they are interesting and keep the students engaged; secondly they provide students with an opportunity to experience working in a team, using and further developing their problem solving skills and seeing firsthand how advanced manufacturing skills are so incredibly important in today's world."

The event is supported by retired US Navy SEALs and US Army Green Berets, who will give presentations to the participants regarding the importance of technology to national security. The program, which was developed by engineers and scientists at the Electro-Optics Center, will be held in four (4) additional cities throughout the United States next year, with the hope of full national coverage by 2017.

For questions, please contact Justin Nolder, Assistant Business Manager, Armstrong County Department of Economic Development at 724-548-1500.

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