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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**U.S. Air Force Awards Ridgetop Group Contract to Develop Innovative Semiconductor Foundry Qualification System**

**TUCSON, Ariz.—May 11, 2010**

The U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) has awarded Ridgetop Group, Inc., a leading designer of advanced tools for mission-critical complex electronic systems, a Phase II Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) contract to develop an effective tool to assess the reliability and quality of nanotechnology semiconductor processes used for mission-critical applications.

Air Force missions often require leading-edge semiconductor processes to achieve the integrated circuit (IC) performance targets sought in critical space applications. The significance of Ridgetop's innovation is that for the first time, a portable and user-programmable process reliability evaluation IC with data analysis software, for nanotechnology complementary metal-oxide semiconductor (CMOS) processes, will be available to the space microelectronics design community. This system, using Ridgetop's silicon-verified IC degradation monitors, will enable cost-effective and fast qualification of the intrinsic reliability of semiconductor processes that are candidates for fabrication of microelectronics to be used on satellite missions.

The \$745,000 contract extends for a period of two years. Ridgetop's solution will provide optimal qualification support beyond any other existing option to facilitate the rapid design, testing, and deployment of space-bound platforms. Over the years, Ridgetop Group has acquired broad experience in designing precision die-level test structures for parameters such as TDDDB, HCI, NBTI and mismatch. These proven test structures will be leveraged and embodied into an effective tool platform for the Air Force.

According to Division Manager Phil Davies, "The ability for Ridgetop's innovation to qualify critical circuits as much as 10 times faster than current methods means that critical applications can be space-qualified in a matter of months instead of years. For the commercial sector, this tool can also be applied to meet the needs of fabless semiconductor firms to rigorously compare the performance of different foundry processes in a deterministic way. "

**About Ridgetop Group**

Ridgetop Group, Inc. is the world leader in providing advanced and innovative tools and design services supporting critical applications. The firm is recognized as a Trusted Supplier designing high-performance Integrated circuits for critical applications, under the DoD's Trusted Foundry Program. Founded in 2000, Ridgetop has built an impressive list of government and commercial customers in North America, Europe, and Asia.

For more information, please contact Phil Davies, Director, Sales and Marketing at 520-742-3300, [phil.davies@ridgetopgroup.com](mailto:phil.davies@ridgetopgroup.com), or visit our website at [www.RidgetopGroup.com](http://www.RidgetopGroup.com).

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