

Congrats to Paul's Robotics, Terra Engineering and Braundo Rancho for winning the Regolith Challenge prizes! Way to move some moon dirt.

A robot was required to pick up at least 150 kilograms of simulated lunar soil within 30 minutes from a simulated test bed 4 meters square.

The top 3 teams achieving this task received cash prizes of \$500,000, \$150,000 and \$100,000

Paul's Robotics, a robot built by students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Massachusetts, picked up and deposited more than 440 kilograms of material to win.

Braundo Rancho was the first team to qualify for the prize, which is funded under NASA's Centennial Challenges program. The competition was held at NASA Research Park Oct. 17-18.

Technology From Regolith Excavation Challenge Seen As Useful For Lunar Base. New Scientist (10/19, Campbell) reported on the completion of NASA's Regolith Excavation Challenge, noting this was the first year "any team's machine performed well enough to claim the bounty. He notes this type of technology "will be needed for many activities needed to establish a permanent moon base, from harvesting water to digging bunkers that would protect astronauts from solar flares and making bricks for construction, says" Greg Schmidt, deputy director of the Lunar Science Institute. The article noted that "despite recent doubts over NASA's budget and technology, he remains optimistic about making a return to the moon." MSNBC.com (10/20) also covers the story.