

SENEDIA hosts NUWC Division Newport Overview on their Annual Naval Technology Exercise (ANTX)

On Tuesday, January 17, 2017, the Southeastern New England Defense Industry Alliance (SENEDIA) hosted a morning briefing by the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport (NUWC Division Newport) to discuss their Annual Naval Technology Exercise (ANTX). This was the inaugural event for SENEDIA's Tech Talk series, focused on exposing, exploring and sharing defense related technologies and applications

Tom Fulton, NUWC Division Newport's Systems Assessment Branch Head in the Undersea Warfare Weapons, Vehicles and Defensive Systems Department and ANTX Director, spoke about the purpose, timeline and opportunities associated with the exercises, as well as details about the successful ANTX 2016 and the upcoming ANTX 2017 events. Frank McNeilly, NUWC Division Newport's Waterfront Operations Branch Head in the Ranges, Engineering, and Analysis Department, provided an overview of the Narragansett Bay Test Facility (NBTF).

Also in attendance from NUWC Division Newport, in support of this overview, were Theresa Baus, Technology Partnership Office Head and Joe Murphy, Corporate Operations Department.

The yearly naval technology exercise was created by NUWC Division Newport two years ago, and is in the planning stage for the third annual exercise, scheduled for August 14-18, 2017, where NUWC Division Newport is partnering with Naval Surface Warfare Center in Panama City, Florida (NSWC Panama City Division). This yearly unclassified exercise enables US Navy stakeholders to see future in-water technologies in action. Industry partners, warfare centers and universities are invited to showcase their capabilities and technologies during this week-long event.

The theme for the upcoming exercise is "Battlespace Preparation in a Contested Environment." During this event companies have an opportunity to test new unmanned systems and related technologies in Narragansett Bay, with access to NUWC Division Newport, the NBTF, and NSWC Panama City Division Operational Areas including their ranges, facilities and technical expertise. Most activities happen at the NBTF. Some of the areas that will be addressed in this exercise are mine countermeasures, ocean mapping, exercising algorithms, and tactics and technical procedures.

ANTX provides a low-risk, low-loss environment where engineers, developers, and scientists can evaluate their technologies and interact with members of the Naval operations community. As Tom Fulton explained, ANTX offers "a collaborative forum for rapid prototyping, speed to fleet development, for building technologies." Companies have an opportunity to demonstrate their technologies and capabilities in operationally relevant scenarios. They gain exposure to Navy leadership and engage in a feedback loop involving the requirements community and company R&D investment decision makers. The costs for all ranges, piers and boating services are covered by NUWC Division Newport. DEVRON5 from Keyport, Washington will be participating, as one representative of the end user community.

Consistent with ANTX 2016, NUWC Division Newport is anticipating a wide range of companies to participate in the August 2017 exercise. ANTX 2016 involved over 30 organizations from government, industry and academia, demonstrating across all domains including unmanned systems, command and control methods, and communication methods as they addressed the theme of "Cross Domain

Communications and Command & Control.” In addition to various codes participating from NUWC Division Newport, some of the players included Northrup Grumman, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics/Blue Fin, Ultra Electronics, Mikel, Digital Design & Imaging Services, and the University of RI. At the end of the exercise, there was extensive communication with the community in the form of an ANTX summary, press releases and articles, both by NUWC and the other participating organizations.

Most companies from last year’s ANTX are participating again this year and there are many who have committed to participate for the first time. All participants recognize that these exercises represent a chance for them to get their technologies and capabilities into the water, performing in front of stakeholders. Of the 45 proposals submitted for 2017 ANTX participation, 40 were accepted. While participants for the August exercise have been selected, there may be opportunities for other companies and organizations to participate in ANTX by collaborating and partnering with selected participants.

Last year’s event grew considerably from the first one, conducted in 2015, with the theme, “Undersea Constellations.” As a result of the success with these NUWC Division Newport events, there are now 4 or 5 similar ANTX events that have emerged across the country.

The presentation offered insight into the capabilities and features of the NBTF. In addition to providing a shallow water, littoral environment for research, development and evaluation, the testing facility has very close proximity to the labs of the NUWC Division Newport. Whether it is unmanned underwater vehicles, unmanned surface vehicles, or unmanned autonomous vehicles, the shallow water environment offers low loss/low risk features, along with rescue services for equipment and products with a Navy dive team on location. NBTF has a secure area, as well as a high bay and machine shop for quick turnaround for minor repairs. These capabilities and services are fee-based, according to need and equipment usage, and can be utilized throughout the entire year.

More information on ANTX can be found here: <http://www.navsea.navy.mil/Home/Warfare-Centers/NUWC-Newport/What-We-Do/Special-Events/>. This web site includes a video of the 2016 ANTX.