FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Society of Fire Protection Engineers Educational & Scientific Foundation Awards Chief Donald J. Burns Memorial Research Grant to the University of Maryland

Aimed at Keeping First Responders Safer During Building Emergencies, the Grant Is Awarded through a Partnership with Bentley Systems

BETHESDA, MD – March 5, 2014 – The Society of Fire Protection Engineers’ (SFPE) Educational & Scientific Foundation announced that the Chief Donald J. Burns Memorial Research Grant has been awarded to the University of Maryland’s Department of Fire Protection Engineering. The $25,000 grant is named in memory of FDNY Assistant Chief Donald Burns, who died in the collapse of the World Trade Center Towers on September 11, 2001, while setting up his command post to direct the evacuation. The purpose of this grant is to help advance the integration of information modeling as a means of improving infrastructure safety and first responder preparedness.

The grant was awarded through a partnership with Bentley Systems, Incorporated, a global leader dedicated to providing comprehensive software solutions for sustaining infrastructure.

“We are deeply honored to accept this award dedicated to Chief Donald Burns, who was among the 343 firefighters that gave their lives in the collapse of New York City’s Twin Towers,” said Dr. André W. Marshall, an associate professor with the University of Maryland’s Department of Fire Protection Engineering. “With this grant, we will produce software and hardware solutions to better predict fire hazards and mitigate their impact in commercial and governmental buildings, thereby reducing both civilian and firefighter deaths and injuries caused by fires.”

The one-year grant seeks to demonstrate real-time fire information using commercially available building sensors, novel modeling approaches and well-controlled fire laboratory tests. It will take state-of-the-art Building Information Modeling (BIM) technology and use this fire information to provide real-time information on the size and location of a fire to emergency first responders.

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“I know Don would be very honored to have his name associated with the important research work this grant will make possible. Though best known for his leadership and expertise as a fireground tactician and strategist, Don also was something of a technologist, who fully appreciated the value of innovative software and hardware in preventing fire hazards,” said Lew Reed, Bentley Systems vice president and Chief Burns’ brother-in-law. “Providing new technology solutions that can reduce civilian and first responder deaths and injuries caused by fires is a great way to salute Don’s many years of dedication and sacrifice to the community he served and unwavering commitment to inspiring and safeguarding the firefighters he led.”

Each year, over a five-year period, the Chief Donald J. Burns Memorial Research Grant will fund one or more baccalaureate, master’s, or doctorate student global research projects that apply information modeling to improving emergency responder safety when training for, responding to, and operating during building emergencies.

The grant is awarded to research the use of information management technology that:

- provides “real-time” building-specific information to key fire department personnel during and in response to emergency operations;
- utilizes the principles of fire dynamics to predict how fire service operations will impact conditions within a building;
- provides information to fire department personnel regarding the design of a building’s structural framework, structural fire protection, and how the fire may impact structural stability during a fire;
- predicts how humans will behave in a specific structure during a building fire and how their actions will impact fire department operations.

“This grant provides an important opportunity to advance the science and technology that helps protect the lives of the men and women who share Chief Burns’ passion for serving the public in the honorable and selfless profession of firefighting,” said April Hammond-Berkol, Chair of the SFPE Educational & Scientific Foundation’s Board of Governors. “Specifically, this grant incorporates the principles of fire protection engineering into building information management to provide tools that can be used by first responders.”

About Chief Donald J. Burns
Chief Donald Burns was a decorated 39-year veteran of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). He was known for his in-depth knowledge of firefighting and the FDNY, and is fondly remembered as a walking encyclopedia for his broad knowledge of New York City. Fighting fires was his passion, and he inspired many of his colleagues within the department, who hailed him as an exceptional leader and brilliant tactician and strategist. Burns was elevated to lieutenant and later captain before being named chief of operations after the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993. He was promoted to Citywide Tour Commander in 1997. Burns is survived by his wife, Elizabeth, and children Lori; Michael, a police officer; and Patrick, a lieutenant in the FDNY.
Society of Fire Protection Engineers

About Bentley Systems, Incorporated
Bentley is the global leader dedicated to providing architects, engineers, geospatial professionals, constructors, and owner-operators with comprehensive software solutions for sustaining infrastructure. Bentley Systems applies information mobility to improve asset performance by leveraging information modeling through integrated projects for intelligent infrastructure. Its solutions encompass the MicroStation platform for infrastructure design and modeling, the ProjectWise platform for infrastructure project team collaboration and work sharing, and the AssetWise platform for infrastructure asset operations— all supporting a broad portfolio of interoperable applications and complemented by worldwide professional services. Founded in 1984, Bentley has more than 3,000 colleagues in 50 countries, more than $600 million in annual revenues, and since 2005 has invested more than $1 billion in research, development, and acquisitions.

About the Society of Fire Protection Engineers
Organized in 1950, the Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) is a global organization that represents engineers engaged in fire protection. Through its membership of over 5,000 professionals and 70 international chapters, SFPE advances the science and practice of fire protection engineering while maintaining a high ethical standard. SFPE and its members serve to make the world a safer place by reducing the burden of unwanted fire through the application of science and technology. More information on SFPE can be found at www.sfpe.org.

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