

Robotics Industry Posts 30% Growth in North America

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2005 On Record Pace

Ann Arbor, MI – November 4, 2005 – North American robotics companies are on pace for a record year in 2005, with new orders up 30% in North America in the first nine months, according to new statistics from the Robotic Industries Association (RIA), the industry's trade group headquartered here.

Through September, a total of 14,840 robots valued at \$913.3 million had been ordered by North American manufacturing companies. When sales to companies outside North America are added in, the totals are 15,791 robots, valued at \$961.5 million.

“We expect that the final year end numbers will set a record for total robots ordered, eclipsing the mark set in 1999, and will come close to a record in terms of revenue,” said Donald A. Vincent, Executive Vice President of RIA. Vincent noted that robotics prices have fallen over the past several years, making them more affordable than ever for manufacturing companies of all sizes.

According to RIA, the biggest growth areas this year have been for robots used in material handling applications (+45%), arc welding (+37%) and spot welding (+19%). The automotive industry, traditionally the largest robotics user, has increased its robotics orders by 44% this year. Vincent attributes this to the fact that automotive companies and their suppliers are finding new applications for robots in order to boost productivity, increase flexibility, improve quality, and reduce overall manufacturing costs. Metalworking industries also are increasing their purchases of robots this year, as are companies in life sciences, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, and electronics, said Vincent.

Vincent expects the robotics industry to get a boost in the fourth quarter of 2005 and into 2006 from the recent International Robots & Vision Show held in Chicago at the end of September. The show attracted 8,347 participants, many who plan to buy robots and accessories within the next six months, Vincent noted. RIA estimates that some 155,000 robots are now being used in factories in the United States, placing the U.S. second only to Japan in robot use.

Founded in 1974, RIA represents some 240 robotics manufacturers, component suppliers, system integrators, end users, research groups, and consulting firms. RIA's quarterly statistics are based on information supplied by member companies and represent an estimated 90% of the North American robotics market. For more information about RIA and the robotics industry, visit www.roboticonline.com or contact RIA Headquarters at 734/994-6088.

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