

# NEWS RELEASE

— For Immediate Release —

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The Lidar Company™

## OPTECH LIDAR TECHNOLOGY DELIVERS WEATHER REPORTS FROM MARS

**Toronto, Canada** - The weather report from Mars is great, thanks to the Optech lidar technology at the heart of NASA's Phoenix Mars mission. The Phoenix Mars lander made a dramatic landing on the Red Planet on Sunday, May 25th after a journey of 10 months and hundreds of millions of miles through deep space. The first lidar results from Mars arrived late in the evening of May 28th, amid cheers and applause from NASA officials and science team members gathered at JPL and the Science Mission Operations centre at the University of Arizona.

The Phoenix lidar was designed and built by Optech in partnership with MDA Space Missions, with funding from the Canadian Space Agency. The analytical lidar, which probes the atmosphere above the lander, is the first of its kind to be sent to another world. The Phoenix mission is also the first of its kind, selected by NASA from an initial set of over 20 mission proposals, designed to land in the north polar region of Mars to study the atmosphere and look for habitability supporting life.

"The data look great and all aspects of the system are working well," reported Dr. Allan Carswell from the mission operations centre. "I send my congratulations along with those of the Principal Investigator (PI), Peter Smith to the whole team at Optech who worked so hard to achieve this outstanding success." Optech founder and Chairman Allan Carswell is recognized as the true father of the Phoenix lidar instrument. After decades of pioneering work developing the analytic lidar theory, and following terrestrial test campaigns chasing dust devils in the desert, Dr. Carswell was the initial PI of the Canadian contribution to the NASA Phoenix mission, leading the Canadian Science Team and creating the initial design for the lidar system. Allan remains a key participant of the Canadian Science Team, now led by former student Jim Whiteway from York University.

Optech lidar technology aboard the NASA Phoenix mission is teaching scientists about the Martian climate and, in doing so, helping us to understand the factors that affect climate change back here on Earth.

"We look forward now to having the Phoenix lidar open a new chapter in the understanding of the Martian atmosphere," said Dr. Carswell. "In the days ahead lidar measurements will be made during both day and night to provide a highly detailed picture of the atmosphere throughout the mission."

Mars weather reports and more information about the mission are available at:

<http://www.space.gc.ca/asc/eng/exploration/phoenix.asp>

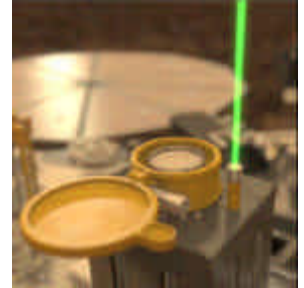
<http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/>

### **About Optech Incorporated**

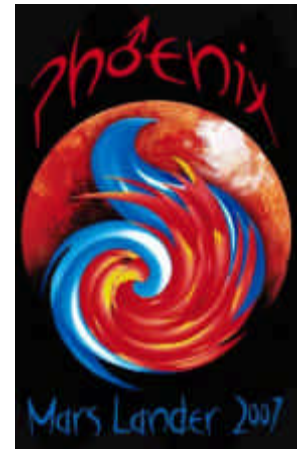
Optech is the world leader in the development, manufacture and support of advanced laser-based survey instruments. We offer client-driven lidar solutions in airborne terrestrial mapping, airborne laser bathymetry, laser imaging, mine cavity monitoring and industrial process control, as well as space-qualified sensors for orbital operations and planetary exploration.

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Artist's rendition of the Canadian lidar instrument in operation



The Phoenix logo  
Photo credit: NASA/UA/Isabelle Tremblay, CSA



Artist's rendition of the Phoenix lander

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