

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Sept. 30, 2026

Baton Rouge, LA, USA

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DEEPFIRE WINS XPRIZE WILDFIRE AWARD!

“Managing fire is the most primeval of human endeavors, yet we still remain far from full mastery,” says Richard J. Barbalace, CEO of [Ailectric](#). The company forms the core of the **DeepFire** team, which was awarded \$100,000 as a Special Recognition in the Space-Based Wildfire Detection and Intelligence Track of [XPRIZE Wildfire](#), a four-year, \$11 million competition to develop innovative firefighting technologies. Led by Louisiana State University professor and Ailectric chief scientist Supratik Mukhopadhyay, Deepfire is one of the top 5 teams sharing the awards that were [announced at the XPRIZE Wildfire awards ceremony](#) at the New York City Fire Museum as part of Climate Week.



The finalist teams competed in real-world scenarios to detect hundreds of wildfires and prescribed burns across the entire state of New South Wales in Australia this past April, refining their algorithms, alerts, and reporting to demonstrate the speed, accuracy, and value of their individual systems. The competition highlighted the limits of the current generation of Earth-monitoring satellites as well as approaches to advance technology in the future.

Over [70,000 wildfires](#) burn an average of 5 million acres, cause billions of dollars of damage, and take dozens of lives every year in the United States alone. Globally, wildfires generated approximately [2,170 megatonnes of carbon emissions](#) in 2023 according to the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service. “The cost of wildfires has grown astronomically,” Barbalace adds. “We need innovative solutions to save lives, property, and ecosystems. Expanding detection of wildfires from space will form a key element in ensuring safety in the future.”

DeepFire’s technology combines multiple synergistic artificial intelligence (AI) systems for wildfire prediction, real-time detection, and future spread. Predictions can aid in repositioning automated cameras to seek out suspected wildfire ignitions, cutting down the detection and response times. Detections can feed into fire forecasting models to predict future behavior, such as direction and speed of the spread. Spread models alert communities of imminent danger and inform how best to mitigate the crisis. These advances have been driven by years of research in AI, computer vision, and system dynamics. Dr. Mukhopadhyay previously led a team to the semifinal of the IBM Watson AI XPRIZE. Other team members include Ailectric’s vice president of engineering Dr. Robert DiBiano, LSU graduate Dylan Wichman, LSU grad student Saiful Sajol and MIT graduate and emergency services expert Matt Braun.

“We offer our congratulations to all our team members, and also extend congratulations to the other awardees whose own technology complements our own,” stated Barbalace. “Our goal is to bring all dangerous wildfires under control. There are many critical steps in this process to predict, prevent, detect, prioritize, and suppress fires. While XPRIZE is a competition, it will take cooperation from many stakeholders to ensure a scalable and global solution. We look forward to guiding the front line of innovation.”

About XPRIZE Wildfire

XPRIZE Wildfire is a four-year, \$11 million competition to develop technologies that rapidly and accurately detect, understand and respond to wildfires. It awarded \$3.5 million across its two tracks in September 2026. Its co-title sponsors are the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company; the Space-Based Wildfire Detection & Intelligence track is presented and co-designed by the Minderoo Foundation. Lockheed Martin sponsored the Accurate Detection Intelligence Bonus Prize, and supporting sponsors include the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Costa Navarino, American Family Insurance, Fairfax Financial and the Roddenberry Foundation.