maxon motors in another mission to the moon.

maxon brushless DC motors and gearheads feature again in the wheels of a Rover set to explore the moon.

Astrobotic Technology, a small company and offshoot of the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, intends to send a lander and rover to the moon in 2016. Astrobotic have been working with maxon motor to develop an economical and practical rover "Andy" using standard parts. The importance of an economical application lies in the long-term goal of Astrobotic, which is to provide low-cost cargo transport to the moon. The result is the use of maxon brushless DC motors fitted with GP32 planetary gearheads in Andy's wheels. The brushless DC motor was specifically chosen for its reliable performance under extreme temperatures and conditions, high power density and torque ratio as well as its compact size.

The reliability of the brushless DC motors and gearheads is of utmost importance as rover Andy will be exploring caves. The belief held by Scientists is that some of the caves may be entryways to underground tunnel systems. If so, these concealed spaces would provide protection from small asteroids, temperature fluctuations and radiation making an ideal base for human stations.

Apart from the rich scientific intelligence gathered, success would bestow the honour of being the first private space mission to the moon. Google is also running a competition with $20m in prize money up for grabs. The "Lunar X Prize" is open to private companies who land a rover, move it 500m and send the captured images back to Google.

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Length of this press release: 270 words


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The brushless EC-4pole 22 used in Andy is a true powerhouse. The rotor has two pole pairs for very high power density and high torque. The motor is combined with the planetary gearhead GP 32 HD, which was developed specifically for use under harsh environmental conditions.

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The compact assembled drive unit. Image © Carnegie Mellon University
This is the title of the media release in another mission to the moon

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