

Ostrich-like robot may be tool for SAR teams



University of Michigan students assemble the robot. Photo/UofM

By Mike Householder, AP

ANN ARBOR, Mich. – A rare bird has landed at the University of Michigan: a two-legged robot named Cassie that researchers hope could be the forerunner of a machine that one day will aid search-and-rescue efforts.

Cassie – whose name is derived from the cassowary, a flightless bird similar to an ostrich – stands on legs with backward-facing knees. The biped that weighs about 66 pounds may not have feathers or a head, but she is attached to a short torso that holds motors, computers and batteries and is able to walk unassisted on rough and uneven terrain.

Cassie, which stands a bit over $3\frac{1}{4}$ feet at full leg extension, was built by Oregon's Agility Robotics and purchased by Michigan researchers using grant money from the National Science Foundation and Toyota Research Institute. Although other institutions have acquired similar models, Michigan's team is excited about using its version to put the school's cutting-edge programming to the test, said Jessy Grizzle,

director of Michigan Robotics.

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