

# Autonomous Driving? Not for a While, Says Expert Panel

by Jim Stickford

WWJ-Radio got together a panel of experts at the OCC campus in Royal Oak on June 5 to talk about the future of the autonomous car to academics and industry insiders.

Panelist David Zuby, chief research officer for the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), said things are happening quickly with development of autonomous technology.

Zuby said that in 2004, the Defense Department entity DARPA (Defense Advance Research Project Agency) held a driverless car challenge and no one completed the course set out on an old Air Force base.

The next year, five companies had tech that could complete the course.

He said Google is getting into the game and, from an insurance perspective, autonomous tech promises to make driving safer.

"A study done in 1970 indicated that nine out of 10 accidents were caused by some sort of driver error," Zuby said. "And that was in an era when we didn't have all these electronic distractions."

"About 30 percent of accidents are caused by people speeding or driving too fast for the road conditions. This technology could really help. We know already that forward collision warning tech reduced accidents by 7 percent."

"This tech, combined with auto braking tech, reduces accidents by 14 percent. This technology will take a long time to become universal."

Airbags have been required in cars since the 1990s and 12 percent of vehicles on the road don't have airbags, Zuby said, adding that, overall, autonomous tech promises fewer crashes and fewer deaths from crashes.

Kirk Steudle, director of the Michigan Department of Transportation (M-DOT), said he looks at autonomous tech from the in-

frastructure perspective. He asked, "What happens when 50 percent of vehicles on the road have this tech? That means that 50 percent won't."

"There will still be a lot of 'dumb' cars on the road," Steudle said. "That means there will be a messy transition from dumb to smart cars."

He said that it's not up to the OEMs to figure out all the rules. That's where the government comes in. And that won't be easy, because in Michigan there are about 600 agencies that have jurisdiction over roads and bridges. And most communities have at least one traffic light.

Rules and regulations dealing with autonomous tech, he said, must answer questions like who's responsible in case of an accident – the "driver?" The company that made the tech? The owner of the vehicle?

Steudle said that Nevada has regs that cover "driverless" cars, but they require additional licenses and training. He said that he thought the purpose of a driverless car was to make transportation easier, not be so complicated that additional training and licenses were required.

"Our approach is to have less government interaction and let the OEMs innovate," Steudle said. "We want an environment that provides the most flexibility and innovation."

WWJ's John McElroy said the driverless car is not new. GM has prototypes that go back to the 1950s. He said we started seeing this technology in a more serious fashion back in the 1980s in Japan – but the infrastructure wasn't there yet.

But, McElroy said, we'll probably see this technology used in other countries first because of legal issues. OEMs won't want to have driverless cars until they can present a body of evidence backing up the technology, he said. And, ultimately, that won't stop people from suing OEMs if there is an accident.

He added that Detroit should be leading the world in the development of this technology.

McElroy said that he believes that trucking and agriculture will lead the way to developing this technology, noting that Caterpillar is already working on tractors that can be told to plow the south 40.

He said trucks that can, for example, haul tar sand in Canada following regular routes would provide great savings and be more efficient because there would be no drivers who had to stop for bathroom breaks.

Steudle said people and governments are adaptive. We've gotten used to dumb drivers on the roads who cause accidents, he said, so we can adjust to smart cars that reduce accidents.

John Capp, director of Safety and Electronics Innovation for GM's Global Vehicle Engineering, said people have to look at this technology much the same way they looked at devices like the automatic transmission.

In the old days, he said, people shifted gears using a clutch, then the automatic transmission came along, and while some people still use a clutch, most people adapted to this new tech that makes driving easier.

"We have to figure out what we can do easily," Capp said. "As the technology progresses, there's no reason to think drivers won't progress as well, like they did with the automatic transmission."

Alan Korn, director of Advanced Brake Systems Integration for Meritor WABCO, said that as he gets older he has become more conservative.

"I am concerned about what happens when something happens and the driver isn't paying attention at the time of the inci-



Kirk Steudle

dent," Korn said.

If people get used to not paying attention because the car is doing the driving, what happens when a system fails?

McElroy said Audi has already demonstrated a self-parking car.

Capp said that no matter what Google says, he doubts there will be a driverless car in the next five years. Korn agreed, saying that ABS brakes were introduced in 1990. The technology is simple by today's standards, but we're still learning about it.

We will need to learn a lot about driverless technology and its uses before it becomes universal, he said, noting that this technology will have to be proven safe before it's put on the market.

A member of the audience said that Google has tested its driverless technology to the tune of 400,000 miles driven. But he added that that's not a lot considering every year Americans drive trillions of miles in their vehicles.

He also pointed out that 400,000 is just a drop in the bucket and driving conditions in real life don't always match those of a test track.

## 'Car of the Year' Awardees Rely on BorgWarner Tech

Eleven out of 13 finalists in the "2013 World Car of the Year" awards contained advanced technologies supplied by Auburn Hills-based BorgWarner Inc., including "Car of the Year" winner, the Volkswagen Golf.

BorgWarner supplies the vehicle's GenV all-wheel-drive couplings, timing systems, dual-clutch and control modules for the six-speed dual-clutch transmission. The Golf diesel version utilizes BorgWarner glow plugs, pressure sensor glow plugs, glow plug control units and cabin heaters, while gasoline-powered models include its ignition coils.

The ninth annual World Car Award winners were chosen by an international panel of 66 automotive journalists from 23 countries to recognize and reward automotive excellence.

BorgWarner also provided ignition coils for the "2013 World Performance Car," the Porsche Boxster/Cayman, and variable cam timing phasers and friction plates for the eight-speed automatic transmission on the "2013 World Car Design of the Year" winner, the Jaguar F-type.

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## INL Drives Support for Local YMCA At Upcoming Charity Golf Scramble

Women golfers are scrambling to enter a charity outing Tuesday, June 18, at the WestWynd Golf Club in Oakland Township.

Insight Network Logistics, a Chrysler provider, and their LEAD women's organization are holding their fourth annual golf scramble.

This year's charity golf event promises to be the biggest yet, with more than 130 golfers participating," said INL event spokesperson Sara Sanger.

"The net proceeds of the outing will benefit the North Oakland YMCA's Strong Kids Campaign, which provides scholarships and funding for preschool programs, summer camp and sports programs like 'Girls on the Run.'

"As one of the earliest corpo-

rate members of the North Oakland YMCA, the company wants to help make the YMCA's programs available to all members of the community."

Sanger said last year's outing raised a little more than \$10,000.

While the golf event is open to the community, participants are mainly Chrysler supply chain partners.

The event is a four-person scramble with a 1 p.m. shotgun start. Golfers will vie in various contests, including longest drive, closest to the pin, and a Vegas hole, as well as door prize raffles and a Silent Auction.

Organizations who would like to sponsor a hole or donate can contact Jennifer Devendorf at [jmdevendorf@insightnl.com](mailto:jmdevendorf@insightnl.com).

## More Than 450 Walk to Raise \$50,000 To Feed Oakland County Families

Genisys Credit Union was the presenting sponsor for the 31st annual Hunger Walk, held recently at the Highland Lakes Campus of Oakland Community College.

The event raised more than \$50,000 to fight hunger in Oakland County.

More than 450 people participated in the fundraiser, which helps support Lighthouse of Oakland County's year-round food pantry. Currently, more than 750 families turn to Lighthouse for food.

"The weather was perfect," said Jim LeBlanc, Hunger Walk chairperson.

"I was excited and pleased to see the support of so many

young people. It sure looked like everyone who remained after the walk for the food and entertainment had a great time.

I want to thank all of the volunteers, staff, sponsors, supporters and walkers for their participation."

Genisys President/CEO Jackie Buchanan said the Auburn Hills-based credit union has been sponsoring the Hunger Walk for many years.

"It's a great community-building event, since all of the support is given back locally," Buchanan said.

In addition to lending support with sponsorship, more than 30 Genisys employees and family members took part in the walk.



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