IOWA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AUTOMATED TRANSPORTATION

The Iowa Advisory Council on Automated Transportation is intended to increase roadway safety, personal mobility, and freight movement within the state of Iowa by advancing highly automated vehicle technologies. The Council provides guidance, recommendations, and strategic oversight of automated transportation activities in the state. The structure of the ATC Press Clippings is done to align with the subcommittees and working groups that exist for the Council while aiming to keep the Council and other interested parties informed. Learn more at *iowadrivingav.org/*

Articles and upcoming events

December 23, 2024

Infrastructure Readiness

INVESTING IN AMERICA: Biden-Harris Administration Announces $130 million in Funding to Scale Technology Solutions that Address Pressing Transportation Challenges in 23 States – *U.S. Department of Transportation*

> *The U.S. DOT announced over $130 million in grant awards for 42 technology demonstration projects through the Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grants Program. Projects for connected vehicles and smart infrastructure were among those receiving funds.*

5 intersections in West Baltimore are about to get ‘smarter’ – *The Baltimore Banter*

> *Planners are installing LiDAR systems at five intersections along West North Avenue in West Baltimore. This initiative aims to understand how cars and pedestrians interact, making these intersections "smarter" and potentially improving traffic flow and safety.*

TxDOT launches AI Strategic Plan – *Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)*

> *TxDOT has launched its Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategic Plan to enhance road safety and mobility across the state. The plan outlines 230 potential AI use cases to guide the department over the next three years. Key focus areas include optimizing infrastructure, data-driven decision-making, improving stakeholder experiences, unlocking workforce potential, and ensuring security and data privacy. AI Strategic Plan*

6 technology trends that drive automotive mapping and navigation – *GPS World*

> *Advancements in automotive mapping and navigation are driven by AI-enriched mapping data, high-resolution maps, dynamic data integration, 3D mapping, enhanced user experiences, and machine learning. These technologies enable faster and more precise map creation, real-time updates, richer navigation experiences, and efficient data collection.*

AVs roll onto U of M campus for food delivery pilot project – *University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies*

> *The University of Minnesota Twin Cities has launched a fleet of 15 self-driving food delivery robots in partnership with Starship Technologies. These robots deliver food to campus users, supporting sustainability goals and offering a real-world experience with autonomous technology.*

Method used by Google Maps to verify speed limit changes and more is pure genius – *Phone Arena*

> *Google Maps is using real-life video from commercial dash cams to update road conditions, verifying changes like new traffic signs or speed limits. This feature is currently being tested in the U.K. only.*

Policy & Legislation

Exclusive: Trump transition recommends scrapping car-crash reporting requirement opposed by Tesla – *Reuters*

> *The Trump transition team has recommended eliminating a federal requirement for car manufacturers to report crash data. Safety advocates oppose this, arguing the data is essential for identifying vehicle defects and improving road safety. This recommendation is part of a broader effort to reduce regulatory burdens on businesses.*

NHTSA Proposes National Program for Vehicles with Automated Driving Systems – *National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*

> *The NHTSA has proposed a new voluntary national framework for evaluating and overseeing vehicles equipped with automated driving systems (ADS). This program, called the ADS-equipped Vehicle Safety, Transparency, and Evaluation Program (AV STEP), aims to improve transparency and provide insights into the safety and performance of ADS-equipped vehicles. The program will be open to all companies operating or planning to operate compliant ADS-equipped vehicles on public roads, as well as those requiring NHTSA exemptions to operate non-compliant vehicles.*

Switzerland greenlights use of self-driving cars on motorways from March 2025 – *Swiss Info*

> *Starting March 1, 2025, Switzerland will allow the use of self-driving cars on motorways. Drivers can let go of the steering wheel but must be ready to take control if needed. Additionally, fully driverless vehicles will be permitted on specific routes approved by local authorities.*

In Letter to President-Elect Trump, AVIA Urges Federal Leadership to Support Autonomous Vehicle Deployment – *Autonomous Vehicle Industry Association (AVIA)*

> *The AVIA has urged federal policymakers to support the deployment and commercialization of AVs. They recommend a clear federal framework to enhance safety, mobility, and economic benefits, including expanding AV testing, reforming vehicle exemption processes, and ensuring federal regulations support innovation.*

Tesla in talks with city of Austin over self-driving technology, Bloomberg News reports – *Reuters*

> *Tesla is in early discussions with the city of Austin about deploying its AV technology. Tesla aims to introduce an "unsupervised version" of its driver-assistance technology in California and Texas next year. Tesla will face fewer challenges in less-regulated states like Texas.*

Economic Development

GM to refocus autonomous driving development on personal vehicles – *General Motors (GM)*

GM will no longer fund Cruise's robotaxi development due to the high costs and competitive market. GM announced it will shift its focus from robotaxis to developing advanced driver assistance systems for personal vehicles. This move aims to enhance safety, improve traffic flow, and reduce driver stress.

Volvo Begins Autonomous Operations for DHL Supply Chain in Texas – *Volvo*

Volvo Autonomous Solutions has launched autonomous freight operations for DHL Supply Chain in Texas. These operations will initially cover routes from Dallas to Houston and Fort Worth to El Paso. A safety driver will be present to monitor performance.

As robotaxi companies stumble in the US, China's fleet is growing – *The Verge*

Chinese companies like Pony.ai and Baidu's Apollo Go are rapidly expanding their robotaxi fleets, while U.S. companies like Waymo and Cruise face different regulatory and market challenges. This competition is part of a broader technological race between the U.S. and China, with significant economic and strategic implications.

Driverless trucking company opens new facility in Bozeman – *NBC Montana*

Aurora, a driverless trucking company, has opened a new 78,000 square-foot lidar testing and research facility on Montana State University's Innovation Campus in Bozeman. The facility aims to advance autonomous trucking technology and create skilled job opportunities in the region.

Cat Deploys First Self-Driving 777 Dump Truck for Aggregates Industry (Video) – *Equipment World*

Caterpillar has deployed its first self-driving 777 dump truck at Luck Stone's Bull Run plant in Virginia. This autonomous truck, equipped with Cat's MineStar Command system and LiDAR technology, has a 101-ton payload and is designed to navigate and avoid obstacles.

Toyota, May Mobility Collaborate on Autonomous Ride-Share Project – *Thomas*

Toyota and May Mobility are collaborating on an autonomous ride-share project using Toyota's e-Palette vehicle platform. This initiative, aimed at providing efficient transit for factory employees and guests, will operate at Toyota's Miyata factory in Fukuoka, Japan.

Public Safety & Enforcement

He thought his car's crash-prevention technology would make him safer. Now he no longer trusts it – *CNBC*

> *A Subaru Impreza owner experienced multiple instances where his car's automatic braking system activated without any apparent reason, causing safety concerns. Similar complaints from other drivers highlight potential risks associated with lane-centering and adaptive cruise control features.*

Waymo's robotaxis pass the first responder test – *The Verge*

> *Waymo has partnered with TÜV SÜD to analyze how its robotaxis interact with first responders. The study aims to ensure that AVs can safely and effectively respond to emergency situations. This collaboration will help develop protocols for robotaxis to follow when encountering emergency vehicles.*

Driver ambulance alerts to improve road safety – *South East Coast Ambulance Service*

> *The South East Coast Ambulance Service is the first in Europe to equip its emergency vehicles with digital alerting systems. The Safety Cloud by HAAS Alert sends real-time alerts to drivers via navigation apps like Waze and Apple Maps, notifying them of approaching ambulances.*

Waymo robotaxi got stuck in a roundabout loop – *Tech Crunch*

> *A Waymo robotaxi recently got stuck in a roundabout, looping 37 times before engineers intervened. There were no passengers onboard, and Waymo has since deployed a software update to prevent this issue from recurring.*

Ill. State Police expand move over alerts to some vehicle onboard systems – *KFVS Channel 12*

> *The Illinois State Police are expanding their "Move Over" alerts to include some vehicle onboard systems. This initiative aims to enhance safety by alerting drivers to move over for stopped emergency vehicles.*

Ford solved one of BlueCruise's biggest problems – *Auto Blog*

> *Ford has released BlueCruise 1.5, addressing one of the system's major issues by enabling automatic lane changes. Previously, users had to manage lane changes manually, but now BlueCruise can handle them about 45% of the time.*

Research, Development, Testing & Evaluation

New research analyzes safety of Waymo robotaxis – *The Robot Report*

> *Research by Waymo and Swiss Re on 25.3 million miles driven by Waymo's robotaxis shows they are much safer than human drivers. The study found an 88% reduction in property damage claims and a 92% reduction in bodily injury claims. Waymo's robotaxis had only nine property damage and two bodily injury claims, compared to 78 and 26 for human drivers over the same distance.*

Test facility unveils digital twin, making its physical AV testing facility available for free in the virtual world – *Tech Explore*

> *The Mcity Test Facility at the University of Michigan has launched the first open-source digital twin for autonomous vehicle testing. This virtual replica enables global researchers to remotely test autonomous algorithms in various driving scenarios, aiming to provide a safer, more efficient, and cost-effective method for testing autonomous and connected vehicle software.*

University of Georgia developing artificial intelligence to make safer self-driving cars – *Online Athens*

> *The University of Georgia has developed new AI models to improve the safety of self-driving cars. These models predict the movement of nearby traffic and plan safe vehicle movements, aiming to reduce crashes and near-misses. Safety aware neural network for connected and automated vehicle operations*

Why It's Time to Get Optimistic About Self-Driving Cars – *IEEE Spectrum*

> *The trend of robotaxis is gaining momentum globally, with significant advancements in cities like San Francisco and Beijing. Companies such as Waymo and Baidu are at the forefront, deploying more self-driving vehicles on the roads. These robotaxis are becoming economically viable, with some in Wuhan even outperforming human taxi drivers in terms of daily rides.*

What Is an Autonomous Vehicle? – *U.S News & World Report*

> *The article discusses current state and future of AVs. Level 3 vehicles are available in specific areas. Level 4 vehicles are expected by 2030, while fully autonomous Level 5 vehicles remain a distant goal. Current systems like Tesla's Full Self-Driving and GM's Super Cruise are still at Level 2, requiring driver supervision.*

Upcoming Events

TRB Annual Meeting 2025
January 5 to 9, Washington, DC

CES 2025
January 7 to 10, Las Vegas, NV

SAE Government/Industry Meeting
January 28 to 30, Washington, DC

Recent Events

Iowa Advisory Council on Automated Transportation Meeting Materials
Iowa Advisory Council on Automated Transportation
Tuesday, October 29