American Center for Mobility designated by US Department of Transportation as national automated vehicle proving ground

Willow Run, Michigan-based facility awarded designation under USDOT pilot program

YPSILANTI TWP., Michigan, Jan. 19, 2017 — The United States Department of Transportation has designated the American Center for Mobility at Willow Run as one of the first national proving grounds in the country.

“We couldn’t be more proud and excited, and are ready to lead the safe deployment of automated technologies and vehicles onto our roads,” said John Maddox, President and CEO of the American Center for Mobility (ACM). “Our state-of-the-art global center for testing, education and product development for connected and automated vehicles (CAV) and future mobility fits seamlessly with the USDOT’s vision and we are honored to have been selected.”

The solicitation of proposals for the designation of the Automated Vehicle Proving Grounds Pilot program was announced in late November by the USDOT and 10 facilities were selected. More than 60 organizations applied to receive the designation.

“We are committed to continuing our spirit of collaboration and innovation and will lead the discussion on common approaches by convening a group of similar facilities,” Maddox said. “We envision being the national and global hub for CAV technologies supported by Michigan’s high concentration of mobility expertise, and we are excited to partner with the USDOT, the State of Michigan, and industry to establish a fully-capable, real-world testing and innovation center that will be instrumental in putting self-driving cars on America’s roads safely.”

Located on 530-plus acres at the famous and innovative Willow Run site, the Center will be a purpose-built facility designed for testing, education and product development, to enable safe validation and self-certification of CAV technology, and to accelerate the development of voluntary standards, leveraging Michigan’s unmatched mobility expertise.

"The state of Michigan has already established a robust connected vehicle ecosystem by bringing manufacturers, researchers, government officials and other stakeholders together - and ACM will play a central role in this continuing partnership," said Gov. Rick Snyder. “Michigan is in a leadership position in this arena but we aren’t looking to
leave anyone behind. Instead we want to be the place where everyone comes together and makes the future happen.”

The Center will include myriad real world environments with the ability to test under varied, yet controlled conditions.

“I am thrilled that the American Center for Mobility has received this important designation as a proving ground for CAV technologies that will keep Michigan at the forefront of the future of mobility,” said Senator Gary Peters. “I worked with the Obama Administration to open this competition and make designated testing facilities a priority, and I will continue urging the next Administration to fully utilize ACM to get these revolutionary technologies ready for America’s roads. I’ve been proud to be involved in this project since its conception, and look forward to continuing our joint efforts to launch this world-class facility that will ensure Michigan and the United States continue to lead the way in developing these lifesaving technologies.”

The Center will offer access to an unmatched range of driving environments and infrastructure including a 2.5-mile highway loop, a 700-foot curved tunnel, two double overpasses, intersections, roundabouts, and a dedicated cellular LTE network provided by AT&T.

“This is an exciting day for Michigan and a significant step forward in securing our place as the leader in the future of mobility,” said Congresswoman Debbie Dingell. “Michigan has always been the heart and soul of the auto industry, and having ACM designated as a national proving ground will help ensure we will be the epicenter for the testing, validation and verification of CAVs. I look forward to continuing to work with ACM, federal and state officials, industry and all stakeholders to ensure Michigan stays at the forefront of innovation in the auto industry.”

Additionally, the Center’s location supports experimentation in varying weather conditions due to Michigan’s dynamic climate, and is a short distance from the University of Michigan’s Mcity, which was designed for early-stage CAV research and teaching. With complementary but varied programs, the organizations can share best practices to the benefit of both facilities.

“When the world thinks automobiles they think Michigan, and for good reason,” said Senator Debbie Stabenow. “This federal designation solidifies Michigan’s automotive leadership well into the future and helps keep us on the cutting edge of innovation. This is an exciting public/private partnership and I salute our many partners in industry and government whose vision and hard work made this happen.”

The American Center for Mobility is a joint initiative with the State of Michigan founded in partnership with the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Michigan Economic Development Corp., the University of Michigan, Business Leaders for Michigan and Ann Arbor SPARK.
“Receiving federal designation affirms the vision for creating ACM - establishing a catalyst for accelerating the deployment of new forms of transportation,” said Doug Rothwell, President and CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan and chair of the Center’s Board of Directors. “Michigan just took one more step towards establishing itself as the leader in a new growth industry.”

The American Center for Mobility is a proud partner with Planet M, Michigan’s epicenter for mobility. Michigan has always been the leader of the automotive industry, and as vehicle and transportation technologies continue to evolve in amazing ways, Michigan is continuing to lead the way. The entire State and the auto industry are transforming into the global center for mobility, Planet M.

To learn more about the American Center for Mobility, please visit us online at: www.acmwillowrun.org

For more information, please contact:
Jenni Omness
Email: JOmness@webershandwick.com
Phone: (248) 203-8142