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Connected Vehicle Proving Center Moves To UM-Dearborn

The Connected Vehicle Proving Center, a state-launched, independent initiative to advance and attract to the state industries engaged with development of safer, more efficient vehicles and roads, is moving to the University of Michigan-Dearborn College of Engineering and Computer Science from its original home at Ann Arbor's Center for Automotive Research, an independent, non-profit research organization.

"Vehicle connectivity and the electrification of vehicles are two areas critical to the future of the automotive industry, each representing a paradigm shift for the car of the future and the industry as a whole," according to Udi Naamani, director and general manager.

The objective of the Connected Vehicle Proving Center is to establish the infrastructure required for researchers and companies to explore ways to connect vehicles with each other and with the road and highway infrastructure.

"Vehicle communication improves all aspects of the travel experience, including safety, mobility, environmental impact, and quality of life," according to Steve Underwood, director and principal investigator for the project.

The CVPC was launched in 2006 with seed money from the Michigan Economic Development Corp. through the 21st Century Jobs Fund. The goal is to establish a self-sustained and viable shared "one-stop shop" product development, testing and evaluation operation that would

attract jobs and provide stimulus to the emerging connected-vehicle industry in general and in Michigan.

"By leveraging our position as the home of the auto industry in the United States, we have the opportunity to attract and develop the connected-vehicle industry in Michigan, strengthening our leadership position, and reducing the migration of auto-related jobs, assets and talent out of the state," Underwood said.

The move to the UM-Dearborn campus will allow the CVPC to take advantage of the campus' Institute for Advanced Vehicle Systems and its laboratories, garage, research facilities, and access to technical support staff.

"This will help supply the missing pieces we need to grow as a collaborative or competitive resource to industry and research projects alike," Naamani said. "We are confident that being hosted by UM-Dearborn will transform the CVPC capabilities and position it to achieving its goals."

UM-Dearborn has a long history of close collaboration with the automotive and other industries, both in terms of educational and professional development programs, as well as in faculty research.

"There is a clear synergy between the mission of the CVPC and the goals of the college," according to Subrata Sengupta, dean of UM-Dearborn's College of Engineering and Computer Science. "We are committed to provide them with access to educated talent, technical personnel and professors with their research."

UM-Dearborn will launch Ph.D. programs in automotive engineering and in information systems this fall, and it is expected that some of the doctoral students and faculty members will work on CVPC projects.

The Center for Automotive Research will continue to support the CVPC in joint projects and other activities, according to chief executive officer Jay Baron.

"We remain enthusiastic and optimistic about the prospects of the CVPC and its mission of attracting jobs and industries to Michigan," he said.

The CVPC plans to hold an open house in June to display its new home and facilities to its patrons and partners.