

SELF-DRIVING CARS HEADED TO CONTRA COSTA

CCTA Announces Partnership with Mercedes-Benz to Test Cutting Edge Transportation Technologies at Concord Naval Weapons Station

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CONCORD, CA – The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and Mercedes-Benz Research & Development North America, Inc. (MBRDNA) announced a new agreement to partner with the City of Concord and the United States Navy to bring self-driving cars to Contra Costa. Under the agreement, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority and Mercedes-Benz Research & Development Northern California (MBRDNA) have licenses to test cutting edge transportation technology including traffic signals that ‘communicate’ with cars, and connected and autonomous driving vehicles at a new test bed within the Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS).

“The Contra Costa Transportation Authority is committed to supporting research that enhances safety while shining a spotlight on innovation,” stated Executive Director, Randy Iwasaki. “We’re extremely proud to be working with the City of Concord, Mercedes-Benz and the Navy to bring cutting edge technology to Contra Costa and we look forward to connecting our resources with those advancing research and technology to improve transportation.”

“We can use the test site in Concord, California, to run simulation tests with self-driving vehicles in a secure way, including specific hazardous situations”, explained Dr. Axel Gern, head of autonomous driving at Mercedes-Benz Research & Development North America, Inc. (MBRDNA). “Taken in conjunction with the results of our test drives on public roads, these tests will help us with the ongoing development of our autonomous cars.” The focus of research nevertheless continues to lie on the tests undertaken in a real-life environment, he emphasized.

Mercedes-Benz was able to provide impressive proof of the viability of autonomous driving in today's complex urban and inter-city traffic last year. In August 2013 the Mercedes-Benz S 500 INTELLIGENT DRIVE, a new-model S-Class equipped with near-production-standard technology, drove fully autonomously the 100 km distance between the German cities of Mannheim and Pforzheim, following the historic route taken by Bertha Benz.

CCTA plans, funds and delivers critical transportation programs and projects that keep Contra Costa moving

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Since mid-September of this year Mercedes-Benz, as one of the pioneers of autonomous driving, has also held an official license from the State of California to test self-driving vehicles on public roads. The additional testing opportunities provided by the CNWS site will enable the company to expand significantly the scope of its research activities.

With paved, city-like roadway grids, CNWS is an ideal site for testing self-driving and connected vehicles and related applications in an urban-like environment. When MBRDNA and CCTA begin testing this month, it will be at one of the country's few operational test bed sites that provides real-world infrastructure and equipment to facilitate the testing of new transportation technology in a controlled environment. The public will not have access to the test site, and the self-driving cars will be restricted to the test bed site. With 2,100 acres of testing area and 19.6 miles of paved roadway, the CNWS is currently the largest secure test bed site in the United States.

"The City of Concord is hopeful that use of the Concord Naval Weapons Station as a test bed hub in the region will attract hi-tech jobs to our community and allow new technologies to be tested and researched," stated Tim Grayson, Mayor of the City of Concord. CNWS was officially closed in 2007 and is currently in the process of being transferred to the City of Concord. "This partnership is indication that we're moving forward in the 21st Century economy," said Assemblywoman Susan A. Bonilla (D-Concord). "I'm confident that this is the first of many partnerships that will spark transportation innovation and smart growth in Contra Costa and hopeful that the City of Concord can one day be viewed as a transportation technology hub where hi-tech jobs for residents are plentiful." The use of the site as a test bed for innovative transportation technology will not impact the transfer, or the community's long range plans for reuse of the base.

About The Contra Costa Transportation Authority

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) is a public agency formed by Contra Costa voters in 1988 to manage the county's transportation sales tax program and oversee countywide transportation planning efforts. CCTA is responsible for planning, funding and delivering critical transportation infrastructure projects and programs that connect our communities, foster a strong economy, increase sustainability, and safely and efficiently get people where they need to go. CCTA also serves as the county's designated Congestion Management Agency, responsible for putting programs in place to keep traffic levels manageable. More information about CCTA can be found online at www.ccta.net.

About Mercedes-Benz Research & Development North America

Mercedes-Benz Research & Development North America, Inc. (MBRDNA) was founded in 1994 and builds on a long-standing tradition of engineering expertise and a strong commitment to innovation and ingenuity to help develop safe, sustainable and technologically advanced vehicles. Headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, MBRDNA is part of the Daimler Group and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Daimler North America Corporation. Its four divisions—Group Research and Advanced Engineering, TechCenter, eDrive & Powertrain, and Advanced Design—focus on research, advanced engineering, product development and testing, and advanced design projects for Mercedes-Benz Cars and other Daimler Group business units.

MBRDNA continuously strives to remain at the forefront of successful automotive research and development in North America. Further information about MBRDNA is available online at www.mbrdna.com.

About City of Concord

Concord, California is located 29 miles east of San Francisco, adjacent to beautiful Mt. Diablo. The city covers 31.13 square miles. With a 2010 census count of 122,067 residents, it is the largest city in Contra Costa County. For more information about the City of Concord, or the redevelopment of the Concord Naval Weapons Station, please contact Leslye Asera at 925.671.3272 or Leslye.Asera@cityofconcord.org

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