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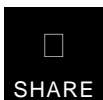
Stratford ready to be first to test self-driving cars while Windsor waits

GRACE MACALUSO, WINDSOR STAR
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Published on: November 3, 2015 | Last Updated: November 3, 2015 7:58 PM EST



A Mercedes-Benz F 015 autonomous driving automobile is displayed at the International Consumer Electronics Show on Jan. 5, 2015 in Las Vegas. DAVID BECKER / GETTY IMAGES



Stratford is racing ahead of other municipalities as it partners with the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association to become Canada's first test site for autonomous vehicles.

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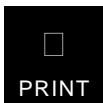
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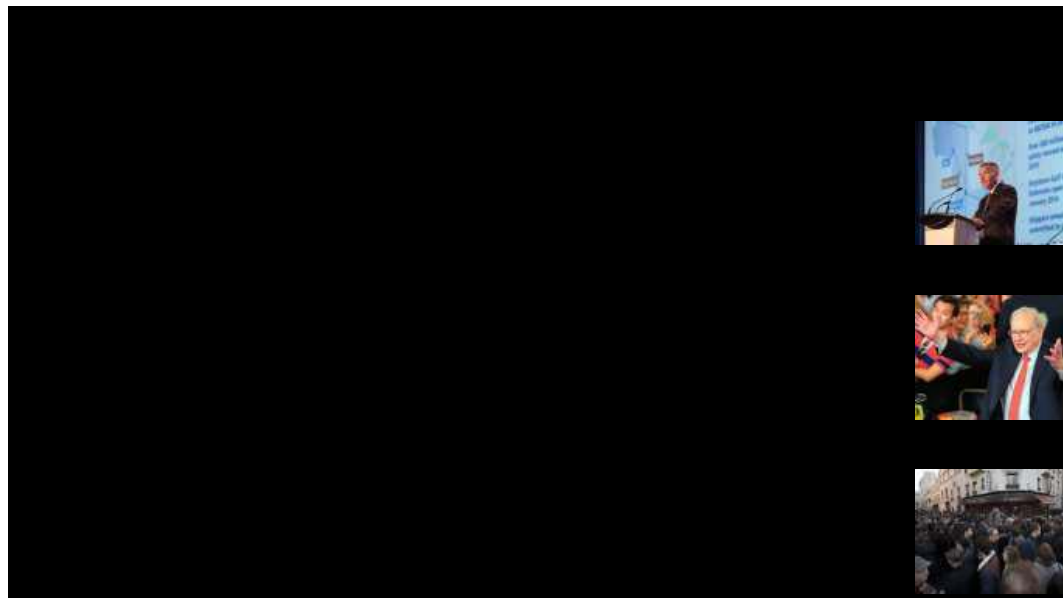


“Stratford is ideally located in the region because it has both information communication technology and automotive capabilities,” said Flavio Volpe, Automotive Parts Manufacturers’ Association president.

The Southwestern Ontario community of 32,000 residents is home to auto parts suppliers for Toyota assembly plants in nearby Woodstock and Cambridge as well as the digital media campus of the University of Waterloo, which worked with the APMA on its connected car program, Volpe said.

But the driving force behind the collaboration was Mayor Dan Mathieson, who had the foresight to turn a city best known for its internationally renowned theatre festival into one of the few municipalities in North America with citywide Wi-Fi, he stressed.

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“That was the biggest hook,” he said. “The next step in the evolution of this technology is multiple vehicles’ ability to communicate with each other and municipal infrastructure. That would have been incredibly costly for the APMA to set up.”

The partnership comes on the heels of Ontario’s plan to allow automated vehicles on any road as long as they include drivers who can override the system if necessary. The provincial government said it would begin accepting applications this month for driverless test car licences, which could be issued as early as January.

The move puts Ontario on track with such U.S. states as California where Google’s pod-like cars are cruising the streets. Michigan, meanwhile, is host of MCity, a 32-acre testing ground at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

The skinny on self-driving cars

Autonomous vehicles are currently being tested in some parts of the United States, in Europe, Japan and China. Nevada, Florida and California have passed laws permitting their testing and several U.S. states are considering legislation to regulate testing on public roads.

Although fully autonomous



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More than a dozen companies, including Ford, General Motors and Nissan, each paid \$1 million US to help build the facility, where they can conduct research alongside university engineers and scientists.

Most major automakers are developing autonomous vehicles; at this week's Tokyo Motor Show Honda, Nissan and Toyota said they plan to sell cars that will allow drivers to give up the wheel by 2020.

Stratford's head start has local industry experts wondering whether Windsor has missed the boat on a technology that is developing at a rapid clip.

"Why didn't we think of it?" said Tony Faria, co-director of the Office of Automotive and Vehicle Research at the University of Windsor. "That would have been a natural initiative for Windsor even if off the bat it doesn't necessarily mean a lot of investment. Simply getting noticed as a centre and for innovative auto technology is important for a city that has the Canadian headquarters of Fiat Chrysler, the Chrysler automotive research and design centre and our automotive engineering facilities on campus."

Stratford, noted Volpe, "didn't arrive at this by accident. It's long-term planning. I'm sure Mayor Mathieson had blank faces staring at him when he started down this path in a town known for Shakespeare."

Stratford has had citywide Wi-Fi since 2010, an initiative that involved installing 400 antennas on hydro poles throughout the municipality, said Paul West, business development director at Rhyzome Networks, a data infrastructure company owned by the city, but operated by a private, for-profit firm.

At 12 square kilometres, Stratford's size made citywide Internet access an economically feasible option, said Paul West, business development director at Rhyzome.

"We're big enough to do it, but not so big it was hard to do," said West, who

vehicles are not available to consumers yet, semi-autonomous driver assistance systems are. These include technologies like adaptive cruise control, lane assist and self-parking. Once a fully autonomous vehicle becomes available to consumers, it will be able to be operated without driver intervention.

More than 100 companies in Ontario are involved in products and services for self-driving vehicles.

Proponents of autonomous vehicles state that, once widely available and adopted, self-driving vehicles could provide a number of benefits, including:

- Fewer traffic collisions (through improved collision avoidance);
- Reduction in traffic congestion/increase in highway capacity;
- Improved fuel efficiency;
- Reduced vehicle emissions;
- Convenience, time savings and lower stress for drivers and commuters; and
- Enhanced mobility.

Other benefits could be realized related to the economy, innovation, infrastructure, environment and land-use planning.

Source: Government of Ontario

lululemon athletica Names Gina Warren, Executive Vice President, Culture & Talent

VANCOUVER, British Columbia--(BUSINESS WIRE)--lululemon athletica inc. (NASDAQ:LULU) today announced that former Nike executive Gina Warren has been named as Executive Vice President, Culture & Talent, effective February 1, 2016. She ...

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refused to disclose the cost of the project. "We built this infrastructure to promote Stratford as a digital economy and digital destination. It allowed us to attract new investment from emerging companies and mature companies. Royal Bank, for example, set up a \$500-million data centre here in 2012."

Rhzyme Networks, which competes with other service providers, such as Bell and Rogers, offers free Wi-Fi in Stratford's downtown. But, customers outside the core must pay for its services.

Rakesh Naidu, interim CEO at the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation, said it's not too late for Windsor to stake out a claim in the field of autonomous vehicles.

"It's early days," Naidu said. "It's a pilot study and it won't be the last one. There will be opportunities for more regions, including us."

But Naidu said he did not know whether it would be economically feasible to establish citywide Wi-Fi in Windsor. "It would come at a cost, but other cities are doing it, so I'm hoping that's something we will look into as well."

West said it's an investment that Windsor should consider. "You just have to put more antennas on hydro poles. It makes sense and cents if you can find more than one use for this infrastructure."

Windsor's proximity to Michigan is a major advantage if it wants to establish itself as a test site for autonomous vehicles, Volpe said. "There's no reason why there couldn't be two centres."

But Windsor must move quickly to forge partnerships with the university and local industry, said Ward 7 Coun. Irek Kusmierczyk, director of partnerships at WEtech Alliance. "We're known as an auto town. Stratford is a theatre town and it's jumping on this opportunity a lot quicker than we are. That tells you something."



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