

Continental Vehicle Has Five Radar Sensors, Stereo Camera

The driverless car perhaps came a step closer to reality when Continental, a global automotive supplier, recently received approval from the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to test autonomous vehicles on the state's public roads.

Continental's testing license is for the company's highly automated vehicle, and represents the first license granted by the Nevada DMV to an automotive supplier.

"At Continental, we continue to invest in research and development for next generation technologies, such as our highly automated vehicle, that will drive us toward a safer, more efficient and more comfortable future," said Dr. Elmar Degenhart, chairman of the executive board of Continental.

"As a company, Continental's strategy is clearly focused on making this type of future technology a reality. It's clear to us that automated driving will be a key element in the mobility of the future. As a system supplier, we are perfectly positioned to develop and launch series production of solutions for partially automated systems for our customers by 2016.

"We will be able to develop the first applications for highly and ultimately fully automated driving, even at higher speeds and in more complex driving situations, ready for production by 2020 or 2025."

After completing driving demonstrations on December 18

in Carson City, the DMV's Autonomous Review Committee approved Continental's safety plans, employee training, system functions and accident reporting mechanisms.

Following approvals, Continental will receive its testing license and red license plate featuring an infinity sign to represent the car of the future.

The plate is designed to be easily recognized by law enforcement and the public at large. It will only be used for licensed autonomous test vehicles.

"Earning this license represents an important intermediate step towards automated driving for Continental," said Christian Schumacher, Head of Continental's Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) Business Unit in NAFTA.

"Continuing our research and testing in the most challenging environment – public roads – under the highest safety standards, will allow us to continue to assess and develop our highly automated vehicle. This vehicle demonstrates what modern technology can do to provide a safer, more comfortable drive."

Troy L. Dillard, Director of Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles said, "We are proud that our state is serving as the platform for automated testing and licensing.

"Nevada's steady climate, varying terrains and driving conditions offer an excellent opportunity for more companies, especially automotive organizations,



Continental's Automated Vehicle on the road in Nevada

to take advantage of this autonomous driving opportunity," he said.

"Automated vehicles, such as the one Continental is testing, illustrate the extensive research and development occurring within the automotive industry and embody the future of a vehicle equipped to make the driving experience safer and more enjoyable."

Continental's current highly automated vehicle is designed to always have a driver monitoring the vehicle behind the wheel, unlike a completely automated vehicle.

Designed as a driver assist system, the automated vehicle can accommodate multiple driving scenarios. Utilizing four short-

range radar sensors (two at the front, two at the rear), one long-range radar and a stereo camera, the vehicle is capable of cruising down an open freeway as well as negotiating heavy rush-hour traffic.

Taking advantage of Continental's sensor fusion technology as part of the ContiGuard safety concept, the vehicle is able to track all objects as they enter into the sensors' field of view.

The object information is then processed and passed on to the Continental Motion Domain Controller to control the vehicle's motion via signals to the engine, brakes and the steering system.

Meanwhile Continental expects to continue real world evaluations of this vehicle.

Arts Academy in Fraser Accepting Applications for 9th, 10th Graders

Arts Academy in the Woods, a fine and performing arts high school in Fraser, will begin accepting applications for the second semester on Jan. 7 at 8:15 a.m.

According to principal Maxwell Spayde, the academy has limited openings for 9th and 10th grade students in the following curriculum areas: Guitar, jazz band, choir, dance, digital imaging, and theater. There is a waiting list for 11th grade students.

Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis for prospective students who have a completed registration form on file at the school.

Chartered by the Macomb Intermediate School District, the academy will accept applications from any high school student in Michigan.

The second semester starts on Monday, Jan. 28. Students come from 30 communities across Southeastern Michigan.

For more information about the academy and its curriculum, or about the above class openings, call 586-294-0391 or visit the Web page at www.artsacademy-woods.org.

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Cloud Technology Behind Accel Investment in Plex

Global venture capital and growth equity firm Accel has made a \$30 million strategic investment in Plex, an Auburn Hills provider of cloud-based ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) solutions for manufacturers.

As part of the financing, Accel Partners will gain a seat on its board of directors, joining Francisco Partners, which acquired Plex Systems earlier this year.

Accel Partners will further support Plex's already advancing "shop floor to top floor" cloud technology for ERP, manufacturing execution, quality management, supply chain management, and business intelligence.

As part of a broader shift of core business processes to the cloud – including storage, backup, and development – manufacturers are demanding cloud-based ERP systems.

Working from the cloud provides many benefits including lower organizational burden, higher reliability, frequent updates, and lower total cost of ownership. Plex Systems continues to lead this trend, having grown rapidly and profitably.

"Plex Systems was early in bringing the cloud to manufacturing ERP, and it now has the most advanced offering in the industry," said Sameer Gandhi, a partner with Accel Partners and newly appointed Plex Systems board member.

"Accel's investment philosophy is to invest in companies that have the greatest potential for success due to their market position, disruptive technology and prospects for future growth," said Gandhi.

"Plex Systems represents an opportunity to help move a highly complex and diverse industry –

manufacturing – to the next computing platform, based in the cloud.

"We believe the manufacturing ERP market represents at least a \$5 billion opportunity, and that less than 10 percent of the market has transitioned so far."

Plex Systems will join existing Accel investments – including such successful online and software innovators as Facebook, Kayak, Qlik Technologies, Dropbox and Cloudera – that collectively define their industry categories and the future direction of online technology for businesses and consumers alike.

Earlier this year, Plex Systems was acquired by Francisco Partners, a leading technology-focused private equity firm, which had identified the company as an early mover and pioneer in the cloud ERP market, with strong growth opportunities.

"Plex Systems is already a 'category killer' in cloud ERP for manufacturing," said Petri Oksanen, a principal with Francisco Partners.

"Plex Systems and our customers will benefit greatly from the validation and investment that Francisco Partners and Accel Partners have made in the company," said Mark Symonds, President and CEO of Plex Systems.

"In addition to validating our strategy, direction and technology, Accel and Francisco Partners bring access to additional talent, connections and other relationships that will enable Plex Systems to continue to scale quickly to meet customer demand.

Plex serves hundreds of customers across a wide range of industries including aerospace, automotive, electronics, manufacturing, and food & beverage.

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