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Chrysler Group Plays Vital Role in Research to Improve Safety and Mobility of Roads

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- Vehicle-Infrastructure Integration (VII) Initiative investigates vehicle and occupant safety through the broad deployment of wireless communications technology
- Practical innovation enables the next step in the evolution of the nation's transportation system

Today at the National VII Public Meeting, the Chrysler Group discussed proposed technology that may enable many new active safety applications, such as intersection collision avoidance, real-time safety warnings and weather, and road and traffic information. This new technology could improve vehicle and driver safety, while simultaneously enhancing U.S. mobility.

"Along with our partners in the VII, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), several state and local transportation departments, the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and other light-duty vehicle manufacturers, Chrysler Group is investigating beyond vehicle-autonomous safety features," said Chris Wilson, Vice President ITS and Strategy, DaimlerChrysler Research and Technology North America, Inc. "Through this effort, we can explore features uniquely enabled through real-time interaction between vehicles and between vehicles and the roadway."

Through vehicle-to-vehicle communications, numerous safety applications could be enabled, including forward collision warnings, merging or lane change warnings, intersection collision avoidance and emergency vehicle notification. Vehicle-to-roadside communications could enable the vehicle to receive information about the environment ahead and to communicate this information to following vehicles. Traffic information, weather patterns, construction work zone warnings, road condition advisories and the contents of roadside signs all could be communicated. Furthermore, vehicle-to-infrastructure communications could provide instant repair or diagnostic service by an automotive dealer or the manufacturer, points-of-interest information, parking space advisories and drive-through payments or orders, to name just a few.

"By installing real-time, short-range wireless communications in automobiles and the roadside," said Deborah Morrissett, Vice President Safety, Environmental and Regulatory Affairs, Chrysler Group. "We will enable real-time communication and promote safety at an affordable price for consumers."

The Chrysler Group is currently starting tests of this technology and the enabled applications in California, Michigan and Florida. These three states are leading in the development of new transportation management systems. They expect to receive significant benefit from this technology, if fully deployed, as it will enable the collection of real-time status information along the transportation network with relatively small infrastructure costs. Furthermore, this can all be done with totally anonymous data, so that there is no loss of privacy to anyone.

"The key here is not in the technology alone," said Wilson. "The key is cooperation between vehicle manufacturers and the Federal, State and local transportation departments in order to develop a coordinated deployment plan that will result in a uniform, stable, interoperable and well-managed transportation communications network with connected vehicles throughout the U.S."

The U.S. leads the world in the consideration of deployment of such a cooperative communications system due to foresighted action on the part of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC). In 2003, at the request of Department of Transportation (DOT) and the automotive industry, the FCC allocated 75 MHz of new spectrum, residing at 5.9 GHz for dedicated short-range communications (DSRC), also known as 802.11p, a variant of the well-known WiFi standard. DSRC is to be used extensively for vehicle-to-vehicle and infrastructure-to-vehicle communication in the U.S., primarily for public safety, but also supporting private applications.

The Chrysler Group continues to explore opportunities to improve vehicle and passenger safety. Current emphasis on structural integrity, safety features and components, as well as testing well beyond federal safety standards, is supported by top ratings the Chrysler Group has received from the government. Eight Chrysler Group vehicles (Chrysler Pacifica, Chrysler 300, Chrysler Town & Country minivan, Dodge Caravan minivan, Dodge Durango, Dodge Magnum, Dodge Dakota and Jeep® Grand Cherokee) received the five-star frontal crash rating, the highest safety rating in the U.S. government's safety crash-test program.

"The Chrysler Group will continue to be innovative and contribute to products geared for advanced safety and security, said Morrissett. "We support the vision of uniform wireless connectivity along much of the nation's roadways to promote accident-free driving and improve mobility."

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