



AP Photo/John Locher

People load in to a Daimler Freightliner Inspiration self-driving truck for a demonstration Wednesday in Las Vegas. Although much attention has been paid to autonomous vehicles being developed by Google and traditional car companies, Daimler believes that automated tractor-trailers will be rolling along highways before self-driving cars are cruising around the suburbs.

First self-driving vehicle you see may have 18 wheels

By **KIMBERLY PIERCEALL**
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Traveling about 55 miles per hour on a Nevada highway, the big rig's driver looked like The Thinker, with his elbow on the arm rest and his hand on his chin. No hands on the steering wheel, no feet on the pedals.

Mark Alvick was in "highway pilot" mode, the wheel moving this way and that as if a ghost were at the helm.

Daimler Trucks North America LLC says its "Inspiration" truck, the first self-driving semi-truck to be licensed to roll on public roads — in this case any highway or interstate in Nevada — is the future of trucking. It's a future that will still need drivers, but they might be called "logistics managers."

"The human brain is still the best computer money can buy," said Daimler Trucks North America LLC CEO Martin Daum on Wednesday.

Although much attention has been paid to autonomous vehicles being developed by Google and traditional car companies, Daimler believes that automated tractor-trailers will be rolling along highways before self-driving cars are cruising around the suburbs.

On freeways there are no intersections, no red lights,

no pedestrians, making it a far less complex trip, said Wolfgang Bernhard, a management board member of Germany's Daimler AG, at an event in Las Vegas.

But it will be years before an autonomous truck hits the highway for anything more than tests and demonstrations, the company says.

The industry is watching the developments, said Ted Scott, director of engineering for American Trucking Associations, which represents trucking companies.

He questioned what the economic benefit would be, with companies paying a driver's salary on top of the new technology, even given the potential safety advantages including less-fatigued drivers.

"Being a tired driver is not as big of a problem as it's often made out to be," Scott said.

The group representing truck drivers — the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association — isn't sure the technology would affect driving jobs, noting the abundance of job openings now and the industry's high turnover.

"We mainly have questions," said Norita Taylor, the group's director of public affairs, citing current laws regulating how long a driver can drive and prohibitions on texting while driving.

Al Pearson, Daimler

Trucks' chief engineer of product validation, said all the same laws still apply: No texting, no napping while in motion.

"We need an attentive driver," he said, with the technology removing some of the stress.

Legal and philosophical questions stand in the way, as does perfecting the technology that links radar sensors and cameras to computers that can brake and accelerate the truck and handle any freeway situation.

Public perception of a self-driving car will also be a hurdle. Daum said society might forgive a number of deaths caused by tired truck drivers at the wheel but they would never forgive a single fatal crash blamed on a fully automated big rig.

For now four states, including Nevada, and the District of Columbia, certify testing of autonomous vehicles on public roads as long as a human driver is behind the wheel, and a few others are keen on allowing the tests.

Bernhard said more states need to allow testing of autonomous driving before fleets of self-driving semi-trucks fill U.S. freeways and interstates anytime soon.

The company is still far from taking customer orders for the trucks.

"We're just getting people inspired," he said.

PANHANDLING: Likely just issue warnings for a month

Continued from 1A

"This has been adopted in other Oregon cities and as far as we know has not been challenged," Ward said.

Transferring items between a car and a pedestrian within the city is still legal if the vehicle pulls over and is no longer blocking a lane of travel.

Councilor David Lougee said perhaps the city should actually encourage the use of a spot in town where people could pull over and give money and food to those in need without blocking traffic or creating a hazard.

The only person to testify against the ordinance was Boyd Sharp, who told the

council he knew public sentiment was in favor of pushing panhandlers out of the city altogether but he was "testifying out of conscience." He said some people asking for money were scammers but other people were genuinely down on their luck and gratefully accepted food and care packages that were offered to them.

"If we don't come up with a solution to help them, then what does that say about our community?" he asked.

Councilor Mary Dedrick said that she had mostly heard negative stories about the people who frequented the I-82 area. Some of them refused offers of food and work, she said, insisting on

cash and then spending it inappropriately.

"I think we need to protect the community," she said.

She also agreed that people standing on the corner, especially in the dark, was dangerous.

The council voted unanimously to pass the ordinance and declare an emergency, putting it into effect immediately.

Police chief Darla Huxel said officers will probably just issue warnings for the next month, giving the city time to order signs and install them.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

EOU: Will also be adjusting to governance by a local board

Continued from 1A

Student Alex McHaddad said the ideal new president for EOU would already have experience running a small, rural college.

"Schools are set up much differently than the average firm," he said. "A business background could help, but at the end of the day it's a school and you need to know how to run a school."

Philip Sebastiani, EOU's student body president and a member of the search committee, said from what he saw during the candidates' visit, students were interested in someone who had experience with student affairs, the financial competence to keep the university from cutting more programs and the ability to be transparent and approachable to students.

Sebastiani said no matter who people were pulling for, there was a sense that EOU was at a crossroads.

"I think the university is really at a crucial point and what happens next will define it," he said.

Tim Seydel, the university's vice president for university advancement, echoed that sentiment, noting that the university would not only be adjusting to a new

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— Philip Sebastiani, EOU student body president, member of the search committee

president in 2015-2016 but also governance by a local board and an assortment of new programs focused on boosting enrollment.

"We're really heading in a new direction," he said.

The new university president will play a role in that charting that direction. Seydel said as university presidents attend campus events, meet with alumni and donors, lobby the state government and make administrative decisions they have a "substantial influence" on their school.

"The president of a university is the chief executive officer and they're the face of the university," he said.

He said students and staff are looking for someone highly accessible who will be a regular at university events and genuinely listen to concerns. The community, he said, is looking for someone who will be connected to Eastern Oregon, who will stay in the area for a long time and

participate in everything from service clubs to meetings with lawmakers.

"They want to see someone who is going to show up," he said.

EOU's board of trustees will have to take all of that into account when they meet in executive session to discuss the candidates on Thursday.

Ultimately, though, it may not matter what they want. The newly-created board of trustees doesn't have any official authority until the Oregon State Board of Higher Education dissolves on July 1. Their decision will be considered a recommendation only, with the power of appointing the president resting with the state board.

Nelson said EOU's board is hoping the state board honors their choice, but it could choose to appoint a different president instead before turning the reins of Oregon's university system over to the newly-created local boards of trustees in July.

Brown lawns loom in California

GARDEN GROVE, Calif. (AP) — It was with more hope than accuracy that the founder of this Orange County city picked the name Garden Grove in 1874 for what was little more than an open plain under the Southern California sun.

More than a century later, this sprawling middle-class suburb of 175,000 people could struggle to live up to that name.

In Garden Grove and other communities across the state, residents can expect to see their gardens shrivel and lawns go brown this summer as mandatory water-conservation rules take effect amid California's punishing four-year drought.

State regulators Tuesday ordered communities to slash water use anywhere from 8 to 36 percent, with the goal of cutting overall consumption by one-quarter. And since nearly half of residential water in California goes to lawns, turning off sprinklers will be one of the first orders of business.

"We can meet these targets by putting the lawns on a water diet now," said Felicia Marcus, head of the State Water Resources Control Board.

Still, in Garden Grove and other places rich and poor, people who paid dearly to make their lawns beautiful are loath to say goodbye to the grass.

Last summer, Garden Grove residents used even more water than usual after Gov. Jerry Brown asked people to voluntarily conserve. And while the city has banned watering lawns during the day, it sends fewer than a dozen notices a month to violators.

Reaching the city's



AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes

A home with a dead lawn is seen in Cypress, Calif., on Wednesday. California water regulators have imposed unprecedented mandatory water cutbacks, but now comes the tough part: coaxing reluctant residents to let their lawns immediately die and start taking three-minute showers.

mandatory new target of cutting water use by 28 percent is doable but will require "a cultural change" in a community wedded to green yards in the front and fruit trees and vegetable gardens in the back, said William Murray, Garden Grove's public works director.

"You are talking about a huge change that needs to be made, and unfortunately in a significantly short period of time," he said.

At least one tree-lined street in Garden Grove shows the path to conservation. Lawns have been allowed to turn yellow, and some of the greenest yards are artificial turf, made possible by the city's recent easing of restrictions against fake grass.

Garden Grove was a farming community in its early years, then took part in the housing boom that followed World War II. Much of the city is lined with suburban tract homes.

More recently, officials

have encouraged development of hotels catering to tourists visiting nearby Disneyland, and a big indoor water park and resort is under construction and expected to open early next year.

Because of the drought, rules against artificial turf are being rolled back around the state, and laws have been passed to make it easier to create drought-friendly landscapes of rocks, cactus and other water-stingy plants.

One of the largest water providers in Southern California recently doubled a rebate program encouraging homeowners and golf course owners to rip out grass, receiving a resounding response.

"That doesn't mean getting rid of lawns everywhere. It means keeping them only where they are useful, not just as an ornament, but a place for kids to play, to have a picnic, to have dogs run around," said Ellen Hanak, director of the water policy center at the Public Policy Institute of California.

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