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Latest news from RDM Group

RDM selected to help bring driverless vehicles to the pavements of the UK

The appearance of self-driving vehicles on UK pavements is moving a step closer to reality thanks to the expertise of a Coventry-based firm.

RDM Group, which employs 39 people at its Bilton Industrial Estate facility, has been announced as the manufacturing partner for the futuristic Low Carbon Urban Transport Zone (LUTZ) Pathfinder project, which will see electric powered pods used in Milton Keynes next year.

The company was selected by project managers Transport Systems Catapult (TSC) following an open OJEU tender process, beating off competition from five other bids thanks to its track record for advanced vehicle design, niche builds and software development.

It will now work with Oxford University's Mobile Robotics Group (MRG) to create the three test vehicles, which will carry up to two passengers and reach a top speed of approximately 7 mph.

"We are delighted to have won this prestigious project following a very in-depth tendering process," explained David Keene, CEO at RDM Group.

"The LUTZ Pathfinder project represents an opportunity for us to showcase our technical abilities in advanced vehicle design, development and build to both a UK and global audience."

He went on to add: "We have invested heavily in attracting the right people with skills in advanced electronics, software development, mobile apps and vehicle engineering and all of these attributes will be brought into play to make sure this ambitious vision becomes reality."

RDM will undertake the manufacture of the pods at its new £400,000 advanced engineering centre in Coventry and is planning to complete the first vehicle by the end of this year.

This will allow the Oxford University robotics experts to install their technology and begin test-track trials in early 2015.

Once these are completed, the pods will be ready for testing in public on the pavements of Milton Keynes, transporting passengers around the town's key places of interest.

With safety issues of paramount importance, the vehicles will continue to be manned by trained human operators throughout the duration of the assessment programme.

The LUTZ Pathfinder project will redefine how people think of driving and therefore fits in perfectly with our mission to promote UK business growth in the field of intelligent mobility, said Neil Fulton, Programme Director at Transport Systems Catapult.

The appointment of RDM Group as the manufacturers of the pods is obviously a major milestone for the project and I am very happy to welcome the company on board.

RDM Group, which celebrates its 21st birthday this year, employs 39 people and is expecting to turnover £8m in 2014.

As well as providing engineering services to the automotive sector, the group also boasts telematics and meditec divisions that provide cutting edge hardware/software solutions and innovative assisted-living products respectively.

For more on RDM Group, visit www.rdmgroup.co.uk or follow @rdm_group_on twitter.

Please note that the image of the pods included with this press release are taken from early concept designs and do not represent a final design. Any usage of these images should be accompanied by an explanation that it shows an early concept design.

Notes to Editors

The Transport Systems Catapult (TSC) is an independent centre for innovation, which connects businesses with the UK's research and academic communities.

One of seven Catapults created by the Technology Strategy Board, the TSC is driving the UK's global leadership in Intelligent Mobility: the efficient and cost-effective movement of people and goods. Find out more at ts.catapult.org.uk

Founded in 2003 and based in the Information Engineering Building at the Department of Engineering Science, **Oxford University's Mobile Robotics Group (MRG)** specialises in mobile autonomy with a particular emphasis on perception and understanding of large workspaces.

In addition to its work on the pavement-based LUTZ Pathfinder pods, MRG is applying its technology to the separate Oxford RobotCar project . which is working towards the first public demonstration of a low-cost auto-drive navigation system on UK public roads.