

## **Latest news from RDM Group - 11.2.15**

### **RDM Group unveils the UK's first driverless pod**

A Coventry-based advanced manufacturing specialist will have the eyes of the world on it today when it unveils a major UK transport breakthrough.

RDM Group, which employs 43 people at its engineering centre in the City, will showcase a prototype of the driverless pod that will be the first autonomous vehicle used in public areas when it takes to the pavements of Milton Keynes later this year.

The LUTZ Pathfinder pod was revealed at a cross-Government launch event by Transport Systems Catapult, the UK's innovation centre for intelligent transport systems.

Electric powered, the vehicle can seat two people, will travel at a maximum speed of 15mph and boasts a range of 40 miles. It uses sensor and navigation technology provided by the University of Oxford's Mobile Robotics Group.

The build of the first prototype has taken just 10 months to complete and has involved eight specialist engineers at RDM. It is anticipated that three pods will be manufactured ready for trials in June.

"We are thrilled to be part of such a groundbreaking project that has the potential to prove that driverless vehicles can be used safely and effectively on our pavements and roads," explained David Keene, chief executive officer at RDM Group.

"It has been challenging and involved pretty much every member of staff at one time or another."

He continued: "However, pushing the boundaries of innovation is what we do best and hopefully LUTZ puts us in an ideal position to win other autonomous vehicle work that could lead to new jobs and even greater expansion."

The driverless pods are being built at RDM's £400,000 advanced engineering centre in the heart of Coventry.

Naturally, safety is the number one factor and this is reflected in the implementation of 19 different types of sensors, cameras, lasers, radars and LIDAR.

The futuristic styling is dominated by a balanced roofline, wheels pushed back to the extremities of the chassis and doors that run virtually the entire side of the vehicle.

It is split into two colours, the main body being satin black and various body panels picked out in gloss white, inspired by the iconic space shuttle.

David, who started the business 22 years ago, continued: "We've invested heavily in ensuring we have the necessary skills in design, electronics and niche vehicle development to make LUTZ a success."

"This contract will help us pass £10m in annual sales this year and has the potential

to create a further five high value engineering jobs.

More importantly, we believe we've created a robust and visually exciting prototype that will showcase the best of British design and engineering.+

The Transport Systems Catapult is the project lead for the LUTZ Pathfinder programme and also a partner in the £20million twin-city UK Autodrive project announced by the Chancellor in the 2014 Autumn Statement.

UK Autodrive will build on the success of the initial programme, with the design, performance and learning from early tests used to scale this up to create a full city demonstrator that will eventually see public trials . involving 40 driverless pods - in Coventry and Milton Keynes.

Steve Yianni, chief executive of the Transport Systems Catapult, concluded:

Technology such as driverless vehicles, intelligent phone apps, and social media, will transform how we travel in the future . making journeys faster, easier, and more connected.+

Through the LUTZ Pathfinder programme, the Transport Systems Catapult has pioneered the introduction of driverless pods in Milton Keynes and the first ever tests in the UK will take place in 2015 in a controlled public environment. The UK is at the forefront of this emerging new technology and could become the leading supplier of autonomous vehicles and systems around the world.+

### **Notes to editors:**

#### **LUTZ Pathfinder**

Carried out on behalf of the UK Automotive Council and the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, and sitting within the wider LUTZ (Low-carbon Urban Transport Zone) programme, the LUTZ Pathfinder programme is overseeing a trial of three autonomous pods in Milton Keynes and assessing their feasibility from both a technical and societal point of view.

#### **RDM Group**

RDM has supplied products and services to the car industry since 1993. It operates across three divisions . advanced engineering, autonomous vehicles and automotive . and has built a global reputation for integrating new technology into a host of applications.

From its Coventry facility, the company can offer access to electronics design and assembly, composite production, software development, niche vehicle build and an extensive interior trim department.

It has grown 20% year-on-year and recently received significant funding support from Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership in the fit out of its Advanced Engineering Centre.

## **Transport Systems Catapult**

The Transport Systems Catapult is the UK's technology and innovation centre for Intelligent Mobility, harnessing emerging technologies to improve the movement of people and goods around the world. We are here to support business growth, increase the UK's share of the global Intelligent Mobility market, and attract investment . creating jobs and generating long-term economic growth.

The Transport Systems Catapult is one of an elite network of not-for-profit technology and innovation centres established and overseen by the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK. All Catapults obtain their funds from a combination of core Innovate UK support and competitively won business and public sector funding. In addition, the Transport Systems Catapult is receiving substantial funding from the UK's Department for Transport.

For more information, please visit [www.ts.catapult.org.uk](http://www.ts.catapult.org.uk)

## **Innovate UK**

Innovate UK is the new name for the Technology Strategy Board . the UK's innovation agency. Taking a new idea to market is a challenge. Innovate UK funds, supports and connects innovative businesses through a unique mix of people and programmes to accelerate sustainable economic growth. For further information visit [www.innovateuk.org](http://www.innovateuk.org)