

Shelley, Stanford's robotic car, goes before the cameras (w/ Video)

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Shelley, Stanford's autonomous, self-driving car, did a workout at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds in San Jose on Thursday, and members of the media were there to watch.

Shelley, Stanford's autonomous, self-driving car, held a press conference Thursday with representatives from several news networks including Fox and CBS. Shelley did her talking on the track, turning laps on the grass at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds in San Jose.

A researcher sat in the driver's seat in case of emergencies, but it was a hands-free job. Computing gear stuffed in the trunk of the Audi made all the driving decisions, while continuously checking GPS signals for directions. The [steering wheel](#) swung around as if driven by a ghost.

Shelley is a project of the Center for Automotive Research at Stanford, led by [mechanical engineering](#) associate professor Chris Gerdes. He hopes to have the car race up the treacherous roads of Colorado's Pikes Peak later this year.

"The idea when you're racing a car is you want to get as much force out of the tires as you can at all times," said Rami Hindiye, a graduate researcher on the project.

"So when you're in the straight-aways, you want to be accelerating as hard as you can, and then when you get towards the corner, you want to be braking as hard as you can. And then, as you're in the center of the

corner, you want to be using all that force to turn the [car](#)."

The real point, however, is to help manufacturers of ordinary consumer cars make safer vehicles that can automatically get drivers out of sticky situations. Driving on the freeway is not the same as charging up Pikes Peak (the freeway is more complicated), but the control issues are similar.

"We use all the available friction on the road to help you stay out of trouble, to be able to make a turn that you took too quickly, or to be able to regain control when you're going to spin," Gerdes told a TV interviewer.

Provided by Stanford University

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