Apple revving work on electric car

September 21 2015

Persistent rumors fly that Apple is secretly working to put its iconic brand on a high-tech automobile

Apple aims to have an electric car on the road some time in the year 2019, according to a report on Monday in the Wall Street Journal.

The Journal report, which cited unnamed sources, came amid persistent rumors that Apple is secretly working to put its iconic brand on a high-tech automobile.

The California company has declined to comment on the reports.

Leaders of the Apple car project, code-named Titan, have gotten a green light to triple the size of the team to 1,800 people, according to the Journal.

While Apple is rumored to be interested in making computerized cars that can drive themselves, the first version will require motorists to be in control, the Journal reported.

The end of the decade could be an optimistic target, and Apple might wind up taking a bit longer or even partnering with an traditional auto maker on the project, according to reports.

Apple has been hiring talent away from electric car maker Tesla to boost its Titan effort, an AppleInsider website devoted to news about the company said in a story last week.

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) on Friday said that it met with Apple to discuss rules of the road regarding testing self-driving cars.

"The Apple meeting was to review DMV's autonomous vehicle regulations," a department spokesperson told AFP in an email response to an inquiry.

Google and several major car makers have been pursuing autonomous vehicle technology.

Google has been testing self-driving cars in Silicon Valley and elsewhere.

Toyota early this month announced plans to invest $50 million into

building artificial intelligence into cars, an indication it could be joining the race to develop driverless vehicles.

The joint research with Stanford University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will take place over the next five years, Toyota Motor Corporation said.

While the Japanese automobile giant did not mention making cars that drive themselves, it did promise work on "intelligent vehicle technology."

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