

Daimler, parts firm Bosch team up to make driverless cars

April 4 2017, by David Mchugh



In this Feb. 2, 2017 file photo, the logo of Mercedes is photographed at the annual news conference at the company's headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. Automaker Daimler AG and parts supplier Bosch Group say they are teaming up to make driverless cars that they say could be on city streets at the start of the next decade. The companies would combine expertise in car making, sensors and software so that people in a specific part of town could order a shared car through their smart phone. The driverless car would then come pick them up and take them where they want to go. The companies said Tuesday, April 4, 2017 the system would let people make better use of their time in cars and help those who do not have driver's licenses. (AP Photo/Matthias Schrader,file)

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The companies said Tuesday the system would let people make better use of their time in cars and help those who do not have driver's licenses.

The auto industry and tech firms have been investing heavily in autonomous driving technology. Many basic elements of autonomous driving are already in use, such as driver assistance systems that can keep cars in freeway lanes or detect pedestrians ahead. But legal issues surrounding driver responsibility remain to be solved.

Other automakers are also working on the concept. BMW, a top competitor for Daimler's Mercedes-Benz luxury cars, has teamed up with chip maker Intel and Mobileye, maker of driver-assistance systems. Together they plan to have 40 autonomous BMW vehicles on the road testing the technology this year, and BMW says it will introduce an autonomous vehicle called the iNEXT by 2021. Last month at the Geneva auto show, Volkswagen showed off an autonomous vehicle with no steering wheel and facing sofa-style seats. Alphabet's Waymo, the former Google autonomous car project, is testing autonomous vehicles on public roads in the United States with test drivers aboard.

The two companies provided little additional detail about the project in their statement but were clear that they intended to come up with an automated system that is "ready for production." The news release said they were aiming for what is known as Level 5 automation—with

sensors and software controlling the vehicle fulltime.

Bosch, headquartered in the German town of Gerlingen, near Stuttgart, has some 390,000 employees in 120 countries. It is a leading auto industry supplier, making vehicle safety and driver assistance systems, sensor technology and software.

"By introducing fully automated and driverless driving to the urban environment, Bosch and Daimler aim to improve the flow of traffic in cities, enhance safety on the road and provide an important building block for the way traffic will work in the future," the companies said in a statement.

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