

Ohio to invest \$15M on corridor for testing smart vehicles

30 November 2016

As Gov. John Kasich announced a \$15 million investment in advanced self-driving highway technology on Wednesday, he urged Ohioans to push back against old ideas about the state.

"Who would ever want to be called the Rust Belt?" he said. "The Rust Belt's some deteriorating, eroding, old, tired and worn out place. You ever hear that term, do me a favor: Correct 'em."

Kasich made his remarks in conjunction with the formal launch of a new high tech effort—a self-driving truck experiment along a 35-mile stretch of U.S. Route 33 in central Ohio. The vehicle by truck maker Otto will operate along Route 33 between Dublin and East Liberty, a stretch the state has dubbed a "smart mobility corridor." A driver will be along as backup.

Officials say that four-lane section of Route 33 northwest of Columbus will become a corridor where technologies can be safely tested in real-life traffic, aided by a fiber-optic cable network and sensor systems slated for installation next year. Leading automotive research centers and local governments in the region are partners in the effort.

The self-driving truck is slated to travel on the Ohio Turnpike beginning Thursday.

As further defense against the Rust Belt label, Kasich noted Amazon's investment in cloud-computing centers in the state; recruitment of advanced engineering and technology companies by his privatized job-creation office, JobsOhio; and upgrades at the Transportation Research Center in East Liberty that serves as North America's largest multi-user testing ground for new vehicles and technologies.

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APA citation: Ohio to invest \$15M on corridor for testing smart vehicles (2016, November 30) retrieved 20 November 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-11-self-driving-truck-ohio.html>

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