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The Impact of Self-Driving Cars on Roadway Safety a Hot Topic at Velodyne Lidar's Inaugural World Safety Summit on Autonomous Technology

Former FAA deputy director and NTSB chairman, Christopher A. Hart, among the speakers sharing expertise and lessons learned from aviation and other industries committed to embracing the evolution of automation

SAN JOSE, Calif. (Oct. 23, 2018) – [Velodyne Lidar, Inc.](http://www.velodynelidar.com), the inventor and leader of the lidar sensor industry for autonomous vehicles (AV), recently convened a host of business, government, public safety and community leaders to explore the use of AV technology in a global effort to advance roadway safety. The inaugural [World Safety Summit on Autonomous Technology](http://www.velodynelidar.com), conducted last week at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, provided a unique forum for frank and open discussions regarding the ways in which autonomous technology can be responsibly deployed to significantly increase safety on roadways.

Former *MythBusters* host and executive producer, Jamie Hyneman, emceed the summit. As a lifelong inventor and scientist himself, Hyneman challenged industry leaders and officials to prioritize the autonomous revolution and realize its tremendous potential to save lives.



From L to R: World Safety Summit Host Jamie Hyneman; Velodyne Lidar President Marta Hall; former FAA director and NTSB chairman Christopher A. Hart

Christopher A. Hart, former deputy director with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and former chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), drew on his experience overseeing public safety in transportation systems. He addressed the myriad challenges – and opportunities – autonomous vehicles face as they are introduced on public roads. Recounting the aviation industry's history of safety improvements, he advised that many of the same lessons should be applied to the development and implementation of vehicles that are becoming increasingly automated.

“The aviation industry experienced early setbacks. Then, airline leaders began to realize that they needed to come together, share information and make important steps toward improving public safety,” he said. “Collaboration was key for the airlines’ success. That same collaboration among the leaders in autonomy is also the key for *its* success. Autonomy needs to be human-centric.” Hart’s message combined a prudent sense of caution with an enthusiasm for reducing the 40,000 U.S. roadway deaths that occur annually.

Oliver Cameron, co-founder and CEO of Voyage, described his AV philosophy as being centered on sharing. Voyage's autonomous shuttles currently provide mobility at senior communities. He also credits Velodyne Lidar for the company's success and innovation.



Participants in Velodyne Lidar's inaugural World Safety Summit on Autonomous Technology discuss safety issues and public concern regarding autonomous vehicles (AV).

"We believe lidar is the backbone of self-driving cars, especially in the way it shows depth," he said. "No other sensor exists that can accomplish this."

Marta Hall, Velodyne Lidar president, called for the use of clear language when discussing autonomy. "Would you drive across a bridge that was 'almost built?'" she questioned. Additionally, while "Driver Assist" systems are being marketed as 'almost autonomous,' Hall believes that greater transparency must be instilled now to clear up public confusion.

Mircea Gradu, president of the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE International) and Velodyne Lidar senior vice president of validation, supports that call for transparency. For example, he said, companies could provide test results through a neutral third party. One option is to explore ways to generate reports through SAE and consumer organizations to provide consumers fact-based AV information.

The summit's second keynote, from MADD CEO, Vicki Knox, focused on the need to leverage AV in efforts to lessen the number of roadway deaths. The organization sees the advanced safety opportunities provided by autonomous technology as a breakthrough that will help save lives. Knox asked government regulators to encourage advancements in the technology and cooperate with industry innovators to move it forward.

"At MADD, we represent the 'WHY' when it comes to the need for safer transportation," she said. "Technology developers and autonomous car companies are creating the HOW."

MADD, in partnership with Velodyne Lidar, recently launched a [co-branded website](#) to educate the public about the benefits of fully autonomous vehicle technology, particularly in preventing impaired driving. "[Jane, a Velodyne Story](#)" was also created to highlight the benefits that safe autonomy can provide families. In the story, Jane celebrates her 21st birthday by attending a concert with friends—only to fall asleep behind the wheel after it's over. Thankfully, lidar technology—which isn't reliant on Jane to navigate safely—ensures her safe return home to her parents. Additional content modules on the site include "[Lidar 101](#)," a video explaining how lidar sensor technology is an essential component of self-driving vehicles.



Actors from MADD/Velodyne's "Jane" safety video use NAVYA's autonomous shuttle to take a safe ride around Levi's Stadium.

The summit included two panel discussions, addressing “Responsible Autonomous Deployment” and “Defining Full Autonomy and its Necessary Technologies.” Speakers included:

- Anne S. Ferro, President and CEO of the American Association of Motor Vehicles
- Alex Epstein, Director, Transportation Safety, National Safety Council
- Vicki Knox, CEO of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
- Mircea Gradu, President of the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE International)
- Paul Konasewich, Director of Business Development, Paccar Trucking
- Oliver Cameron, CEO, Voyage Motors
- Dr. Myra Blanco, Director, Center for Public Policy at VA Tech Transportation Institute
- Bobby Hambrick, CEO, Autonomous Stuff
- Anand Gopalan, CTO, Velodyne Lidar
- Frank Mancheca, Chief Product Officer, SAE International
- Yaoming Shen, Sr. Optical Engineer, Baidu
- Steve Levine, Editor, *Future* and *Axios*
- Christoph Sapet, CEO, NAVYA
- Faye Francy, Executive Director, Automotive Information Sharing and Analysis Center
- Ceto Ortiz, Commander, San Jose California Highway Patrol
- David Strickland, Partner, Venable LLP and former NHTSA administrator
- Ray Mandli, Founder and President, Mandli Communications, Inc.

AV companies NAVYA and Autonomous Stuff offered rides in fully autonomous vehicles to attendees in the Levi’s Stadium parking lot. Both NAVYA and Voyage are currently operating autonomous public transportation in California, Florida and Paris, France.

Also present at the summit were university students participating in the AutoDrive Challenge sponsored by SAE International, General Motors and Velodyne Lidar, Inc. AutoDrive tasks teams from eight universities to develop a Level 4 autonomous vehicle in three years. The competition is entering its second year. Adam El-Masri and Robert Adragna, members of the University of Toronto AutoDrive team, presented to the summit audience their passion for the project and their vision of the social implications of increasingly autonomous transportation.

MEDIA PLEASE NOTE: For more information about Velodyne Lidar, the World Safety Summit or to request an interview with a Velodyne executive, please contact David Cumpston at velodyne@landispr.com / (415) 359-2316.

About Velodyne Lidar, Inc.

Founded in 1983 and headquartered in Silicon Valley, Velodyne is a technology company known worldwide for its real-time 3D lidar computing and software platforms. The company evolved after founder David Hall invented the HDL-64 Solid-State Hybrid lidar sensor in 2005. Since then, Velodyne Lidar, Inc. emerged as the unmatched market leader of real-time 3D vision systems used in a variety of commercial applications including autonomous vehicles, vehicle safety systems, mobile mapping, aerial mapping, and security. Its products range from the high-performance, surround view Ultra-Puck™ VLP-32, classic HDL-32/64 and cost-effective VLP-16, the new VLS-128, to the upcoming, hidden Velarray™. Velodyne’s rich suite of perception software and algorithms are the key enablers of its perception systems. Velodyne supports customers from offices in San Jose, Detroit, Frankfurt, and Beijing. For more information, visit <http://www.velodynelidar.com>.