

# Transportation Tidbits



Welcome to the November issue of the Transportation Tidbits Newsletter! This issue features the latest happenings within the transportation industry along with a list of upcoming transportation conferences and webinars. You can also find some of the latest news from our faculty and students! If you have questions or comments about this month's issue, please [let us know](#). Enjoy!

## Important Dates for NDSU Students

**11/18: Graduate  
student initial  
disquisition submission  
for December  
graduation**

**11/24-25: Holiday-  
Thanksgiving (no  
classes, offices closed  
Thursday, offices open  
Friday)**

## Recent News Updates

## Self-Driving Trucks are Here

Letting the takeout get cold may be a thing of the past for truck delivery drivers thanks to Otto. Otto is a truck from a San Francisco startup, outfitted with \$30,000 worth of hardware and software. As detailed in *Wired* magazine, the truck is the first to make an autonomous delivery. The truck left Fort Collins at 12:30 a.m., merging onto Interstate 25. Destination: Colorado Springs. The driver punched Otto into gear, climbed out of his seat, and buckled his safety belt.

The goal of Otto, which Uber purchased last summer for \$680 million, is not to put truck drivers out of business, but to increase driver productivity. The technology only works where it doesn't require navigating difficult driving situations like where pedestrians are present or four-way stops. The rig's true talents shine once it hits the interstate and is entirely capable navigating by itself, letting the driver deal with other work.

Over the next couple of years, the technology will be ready for commercial applications and will be advanced enough to handle every

[Interested in Shaping Pipeline Safety Through Information-Sharing? PHMSA wants YOU!](#)

[Volpe's Future of Transportation Series Wraps Up November 9 with NHTSA's Mark Rosekind on Automated Vehicles](#)

[A Good Time to Check for Vehicle Recalls](#)

[#TranspoStory: Meet Silas](#)

[FTA Hears You: Feedback from the National Dialogue on Preventing Transit Worker Assaults](#)

## UGPTI in the Spotlight

[Investigation of Interaction between Traffic Safety, Law Enforcement, and environment](#)

[Monthly Grain Industry Reports Update](#)

[North Dakota Truck Harmonization Draft Study](#)

road condition. The vision for the future is where trucks form a virtual train.

The retrofit is not as complicated as one would assume. Three LIDAR laser detection units are mounted to the truck, a radar unit bolts to the bumper, and a high precision camera sits above the windshield. Inside the cab there are two switches to shut off and turn on the autonomous system and bank of computers to keep tabs on all the data.

With the idea of autonomous vehicles looming, many are excited for the technology to make its way to private vehicles. Its likely that the technology will be employed on trucks much sooner than cars. Self-driving trucks are more practical, have a potential return on the investment in the technology, and, with a shortage of commercial drivers, the industry desperately needs them. Right now, researchers are focusing on smoothing out the basics of the technology with the goal to a go-anywhere and do-anything vehicle. For now, a driver is an essential part of the system, but Otto can help remove some stress from driving.

Read the [full article](#).

## Webinars

Check out this list of [webinars](#) offered by the Transportation Research Board. All participants must register at least 24 hours in advance of the webinar. If you missed a webinar and would like to know more about it [click here](#) for further instructions.

- **November 29, 2016-** [Safety on Low Volume Roads](#)
- **November 30, 2016-** [Roller- Compacted Concrete: Recent Research and Development](#)

## Upcoming Conferences

- **10th University Transportation Center (UTC) Spotlight Conference: Bicycles and Pedestrians**
  - [December 1-2, 2016](#)
  - [Washington, D.C.](#)
- **Geotechnical Frontiers 2017 Conference**
  - [March 12-15, 2017](#)
  - [Orlando, Florida](#)
- **11th International Bridge and Structures Management Conference: Abstracts Due November 12, 2016**
  - [April 25-27, 2017](#)

[Annual Awards Banquet Photo Gallery](#)

[Year-End Grain Industry Reports Updated](#)

[NDSU Students Gain Hands-On Experience with SAP Business Enterprise Software](#)

- [Mesa, Arizona](#)

## Workshops/ Meetings

- **Meeting Announcement: Future Interstate Study**
  - [December 19-20, 2016](#)
  - [Washington, D.C.](#)
- **2017 Planning for Shifting Trade Workshop**
  - [January 8-12, 2017](#)
  - [Tampa, FL](#)



## New Student Biography

David Reesman is from Fort Meade, SD. He earned his B.S. from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in criminal justice with a minor in political science. He is currently working towards a masters in logistics management. Reesman served in numerous combat tours and commanded the 128<sup>th</sup> Brigade support battalion. His military career in logistics led to working in logistics in the Veterans Administration after retiring from the U.S. Army. In his spare time he likes biking and hiking and enjoying motorcycles

and vintage cars.

## Kid President is Over it!





**NDSU** UPPER GREAT PLAINS  
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If you have items that you would like to submit for our next monthly Transportation Tidbits newsletter, please email Makenzie Schmidt at [makenzie.lee.schmidt@ndsu.edu](mailto:makenzie.lee.schmidt@ndsu.edu) by the 15th of the month.