

Google to open Detroit-area autonomous car centre

SAN FRANCISCO: Google has announced plans to open a Detroit-area technology centre for its self-driving car programme. The new centre in Novi, Michigan, will house engineers and others testing vehicles provided by Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, a statement by Google parent Alphabet said.



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"For the past few years, members of our team have been working from the greater Detroit area," the statement posted on Google+ said.

"Now it's time to lay down roots."

"Many of our current partners are based here, so having a local facility will help us collaborate more easily and access Michigan's top talent in vehicle development and engineering."

The 5,000 square metre centre will enable Google and its partners to "further develop and refine self-driving technology", the statement said.

"One of the first tasks will be to ready our self-driving Chrysler Pacifica hybrid minivans. We'll begin moving in throughout 2016."

Google added 100 new 2017 Chrysler Pacifica hybrid vehicles to its fleet of self-driving vehicles in a major expansion earlier this month. The collaboration with Fiat Chrysler marked the first time the California-based internet giant has worked directly with an automaker to build self-driving vehicles.

Google has said it would not license its autonomous car technology nor sell the self-driving minivans. The tech giant began testing its autonomous driving technology in 2009 using a Toyota Prius equipped with Google equipment.

It now has some 70 vehicles, including Lexus cars, adapted by Google in addition to its in-house designed cars unveiled in 2014.

Source: AFP

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