

2006 Trends in Robotic Transportation

Article by: Lance Winslow

In 2005 we saw some new innovations in robotics used in transportation. We saw disputes erupt with Rail Road Unions over locomotives, which do not need conductors. We have seen more and more telematic type information and communication, which flows between over the road trucks and dispatchers via satellite. We have seen new mechanisms that dispatchers can use to track shipments within meters of their location, even completely shut down trucks, which have been hijacked.

Then we watched the DARPA Grand Challenge with driverless totally autonomous vehicles navigate steep cliffs, tunnels and treacherous desert roads full of obstacles on a course over 200 miles long and still average speeds of nearly 35 mph. In 2005 we saw ads on Television for new cars which can avoid collisions, detect stopped traffic ahead, even tug on the shoulder harness and let of the gas, nudge the steering will, while checking the next lane for traffic in the case of a slower vehicle in your lane.

In 2006 we will see the military seek assistance with linking up entire convoys of vehicles with no drivers in any of the vehicles. We will see automotive engineers talk about programmable GPS systems which will not only show you your destination on a map, but drive you there, find a parking spot and parallel park your car, without running a red light, breaking the speed limit or flipping off other drivers along the way, while you read your newspaper, watch the news and take a few phone calls. Think I am kidding, I am not, this is the next step and in 2006 this is what the automotive engineers will be working on, so think about it, as in four or five years it will be a reality. Lance Winslow - Online Think Tank forum board. If you have innovative thoughts and unique perspectives, come think with Lance; www.WorldThinkTank.net/wttbbs/