

For Immediate Release
December 1, 2016

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University of Michigan-Dearborn students help shape the vehicle of the future by participating in DENSO's MDrive car share study

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. – University of Michigan-Dearborn students will help shape the future of mobility by participating in MDrive, a car sharing study announced by [DENSO](#) International America, Inc. today. DENSO, a global automotive supplier, with support from Detroit-based [NextEnergy](#), an accelerator of advanced energy and mobility technologies, launched the study to determine what technologies may be needed for a new car sharing segment. The students will provide feedback about car sharing and offer insights on helpful or unnecessary features in current car models.

“DENSO is helping drive the future of mobility solutions through this research and testing in a real-world environment,” said Michael Bima, a lead engineer in the North American Research and Engineering Center at DENSO International America. “Our goal is to learn more about what technologies are most needed in car share vehicles of the future. And this will help us collect user feedback to design products for the car sharing market.”

Thirty pre-selected students attending the University of Michigan-Dearborn and living at The Union at Dearborn will have access to a set of three Ford Focus Electric vehicles. Participants will reserve, share, and use these vehicles on a daily basis to run errands, meet friends for dinner or even catch a concert downtown in exchange for feedback on their driving and sharing experience.

Phase one of DENSO's study will focus on car sharing with a small group of users at one location where the vehicles are returned to a set location. Current car sharing programs have been open to the general public and allow for one-way trips. DENSO is the first to gather user feedback and study the need for car share-specific technologies for people who live, work and frequent one location. DENSO will present the study results at the 2017 SAE World Congress.

“MDrive is a great opportunity for University of Michigan-Dearborn students to participate in an eco-friendly, alternative transportation option on campus,” said Chancellor Daniel Little. “Our students will be one of the few who have the potential to influence the new technology decision-making process for vehicle sharing products, services and business models.”

The vehicles will be stationed at The Union at Dearborn where three parking spots with charging stations were installed by DENSO. Students will reserve an available vehicle through a custom third-party reservation app and are free to travel without limitations within the continental United States. Along the way, real-time data will be collected through on-board diagnostics equipment and on-board cameras will capture video of the user experience while the car is running. Following each trip, users will complete short surveys and participate in weekly discussion boards to provide suggestions for improving car sharing vehicles of the future.

“MDrive is a great example of a collaboration to advance mobility research that will ultimately accelerate the mass development and adoption of mobility technologies and solutions,” said Jean Redfield, president and CEO of NextEnergy, which worked alongside DENSO to develop and manage the program, collect survey data, and engage students.

About DENSO

DENSO Corp., headquartered in Kariya, Aichi prefecture, Japan, is a leading global automotive supplier of advanced technology, systems and components in the areas of thermal, powertrain control, electronics and information and safety. Its customers include all the world's major carmakers. Worldwide, the company has more than 200 subsidiaries and affiliates in 38 countries and regions (including Japan) and employs more than 150,000 people. Consolidated global sales for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016, totaled US\$40.2 billion. Last fiscal year, DENSO spent 8.8 percent of its global consolidated sales on research and development. DENSO common stock is traded on the Tokyo and Nagoya stock exchanges.

In North America, DENSO employs more than 23,000 people at 30 consolidated companies and affiliates. Of these, 28 are manufacturing facilities located in the United States, Canada and Mexico. In the United States alone, DENSO employs more than 15,000 people in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Iowa, Georgia, Kentucky Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. DENSO's North American headquarters is located in Southfield, Michigan. DENSO's North American consolidated sales totaled US\$9.9 billion for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

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