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BRITAIN'S AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY LEADS THE WORLD

Car manufacturing in the UK is alive, kicking and facing the challenges of the future with vigour, says a leading automotive industry expert.

The industry is researching the most advanced technology that will make vehicles cleaner, safer, more efficient and easier and more comfortable to drive.

Dr Nick Barter, Director of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders' Foresight Vehicle, will tell a conference today (March 20) that rather than resist change and shirk challenges, Britain's automotive industry is world class in exploring new technology to provide radical, practical solutions.

SMMT Foresight Vehicle is the UK's highly respected prime knowledge transfer network for the automotive industry and works closely with the industry, the Government and scientists and engineers in universities and research organisations across the country.

Dr Barter, who was formerly the Product Development Director for Jaguar and Land Rover, will give a tantalising glimpse of the technical advance of the industry when he speaks at the Institution of Electrical Engineers Automotive in Electronics conference in London.

Many of the developments being fostered by SMMT Foresight will come into production within the next 10-20 years and a high proportion will involve advanced electronics. Some of the key breakthroughs will be:

- zero failure electronics with self-monitoring circuits and active intervention
- switches that do not have to be pressed but respond to finger pointing
- sleep/drowsiness monitoring
- on-board computers that predict vehicle and pedestrian movements and automatically trigger the car to respond to an emergency
- real conversation voice control

However, Dr Barter will warn that for Britain to remain at the forefront of new technical solutions in the automotive sector, it will be essential for the whole of the industry, government and academia to work more closely together.



Britain's automotive industry creates employment for more than 800,000 people and has a turnover of £47 billion - almost 10 per cent of the UK's manufacturing total - and exports £20 million worth of products every year.

Dr Barter said: "The UK is the chosen base for many of the world's leading automotive manufacturers. But to retain our key position in this highly competitive international industry, there must be an agreed blueprint for the way forward. SMMT Foresight Vehicle has a key role to play in this.

"I am confident we can achieve this, as long as we have the full cooperation of everyone involved. By combining our expertise and skills and agreeing future priorities, everyone will benefit."

Visit Foresight Vehicle on the web at: www.foresightvehicle.org.uk

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