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U.S. Army TARDEC and MDOT continue partnering on advanced vehicle technology

October 5, 2017 -- The U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC) and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) have teamed up again to test connected and automated vehicle technology, this time on the Blue Water Bridge in Port Huron. Today wraps up a week of testing, one of the first steps to eventual autonomous operations of Army line-haul convoys. In June 2016, TARDEC and MDOT tested vehicle-to-infrastructure messaging along I-69 in St. Clair and Lapeer counties.

"Testing autonomous applications on highways and bridges requires strong partnerships and we have that collaborative partner in MDOT," said TARDEC Director Dr. Paul Rogers.

"Military vehicles testing automated applications that bring a full range of options, from driver-assist to fully autonomous, all drive toward enhanced soldier safety."

This testing includes direct communications between the Army trucks and roadside units deployed by MDOT. Messaging that is low in latency and provides proactive information is paramount to the success of eventual full automation for supply convoys.

"Nowhere else in the country is the military testing advanced vehicle applications for autonomous driving on an international bridge crossing," said State Transportation Director Kirk T. Steudle. "Michigan has the resources, knowledge and assets to make this happen."

Connected and automated vehicle technology is critical to reducing the number of bodies in a military supply convoy. Michigan is globally recognized as a leader in smart mobility and the defense industry, and MDOT's expertise in the infrastructure necessary to support such autonomous vehicle testing allows for this partnership to thrive.

"Soldiers give so much to keep America safe," Steudle said. "By reducing the number of bodies in a convoy, Michigan is leading the way to bringing more of them home."

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