



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 18, 2016**

## **Agreement reached on Willow Run purchase** *Major milestone in path to American Center for Mobility*

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LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Revitalizing Auto Communities Environmental Response (RACER) Trust today announced a purchase agreement for the acquisition of land at Willow Run, which will be used for creation of a connected and automated vehicle facility.

First mentioned in Governor Rick Snyder’s State of the State speech in January 2016, the facility, in Ypsilanti Township, will serve as a national center for connected and automated vehicle research testing, product development, validation and certification. Users will include private industry, academia and government. The facility will be developed and operated by the American Center for Mobility (ACM), a nonprofit entity formed in April 2016.

“This is a major milestone in making ACM a reality,” said Steve Arwood, CEO of MEDC. “This facility will be a global leader in interconnected technology advancements, and a major economic driving engine for the entire state. The whole project represents a multi-layered partnership between many groups, and getting the agreement in place toward the purchase of the land is a giant step forward.”

Willow Run has historic significance both as an economic hub for the region and as a center of innovation. Detroit’s status as the Arsenal of Democracy had its roots at Willow Run, where Henry Ford applied principles of mass production in support of the allied effort in World War II, employing more than 40,000 people and producing an average of one B-24 Liberator bomber every 55 minutes. Willow Run also was the iconic birthplace of “Rosie the Riveter,” symbolic of the widespread contribution of women to the industrial war effort. Later, General Motors workers produced more than 5 million transmissions at the Willow Run Powertrain Plant.

RACER Trust took title to the property in 2011. It sold the historic bomber plant portion of the property to Yankee Air Museum, which is converting it to the National Museum of Aviation and Technology at Historic Willow Run. The majority of the remaining buildings on the site were demolished.

RACER Trust has agreed to a purchase price of \$1.2 million for the 311-acre property. RACER Trust also will be making other valuable contributions toward development of the site. In March, the Michigan Strategic Fund, a limited partner in the Willow Run Arsenal of Democracy Landholdings Limited Partnership, the proposed buyer of the property, approved \$3 million for operational costs and to be used toward the purchase of the property.

“It was clear to us from the day we launched that this property held tremendous potential to again be a lynchpin of the Southeast Michigan economy, and we are thrilled that the American Center for Mobility will fulfill this potential and keep Michigan at the forefront of global transportation innovation,” said Elliott P. Laws, of EPLET, LLC, administrative trustee of RACER Trust. “All of us at RACER Trust are honored to be a part of the transformation of this property from automotive production to mobility research and development. We look forward to the redevelopment of Willow Run and the opportunities it will create.”

John Maddox, who was named president and CEO of ACM in April, has been working with the MEDC, the buyer and RACER Trust on the plans for the project, as well as pursuing concept designs for the facility and regulatory agreements with local governments and the Michigan Department of Transportation to create the testing environment needed for interconnected vehicles.

“This is a major milestone for the American Center for Mobility as we continue to lead the effort to create a national center for connected and automated vehicles and emerging mobility technologies,” Mr. Maddox said. “The ability to build out Willow Run with its deep historic innovative roots to now create a center to safely validate connected and automated technology is an incredible opportunity for not just the state of Michigan, but also our country. I can’t thank the MEDC, the Michigan Strategic Fund and RACER enough for working together to get this done.”

Pure Michigan is a brand representing business, talent and tourism initiatives across Michigan. These efforts are driven by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, which serves as the state’s marketing arm and lead advocate for business growth, jobs and opportunity with a focus on helping grow Michigan’s economy.

For more on the MEDC and its initiatives, visit [michiganbusiness.org](http://michiganbusiness.org). For Michigan travel news, updates and information, visit [michigan.org](http://michigan.org). Michigan residents interested in seeking employment with any of Michigan's growing companies should check [mitalent.org](http://mitalent.org) where more than 100,000 jobs are currently available in a variety of industries.

**Watch** ACM President and CEO John Maddox discuss the importance of this milestone in development of the American Center for Mobility.

**About RACER Trust:** RACER (Revitalizing Auto Communities Environmental Response) Trust was created to clean up and position for redevelopment properties and other facilities owned by the former General Motors Corp. before its 2009 bankruptcy. RACER is one of the largest holders of industrial property in the United States and is the largest environmental response and remediation trust in U.S. history. When the Trust was formed, it owned properties at 89 locations in 14 states, principally in the Midwest and Northeast. The Trust was created by a settlement agreement in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court between the U.S. Government, the 14 states where the former GM properties are located, and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, which owns land adjoining one of the properties in Upstate New York. For more information, please visit our website: [www.racertrust.org](http://www.racertrust.org).

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