

January 23, 2020 12:58 PM | UPDATED 3 HOURS AGO

CWRU hopes a local company is on the road to producing a safer, faster street-painting system

EDITOR'S CHOICE



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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The RoadPrintz technology at work

Case Western Reserve University and RoadPrintz Inc. have signed a licensing agreement to advance a robotics-driven technology. Plus, Kent State University has received a \$175,000 federal grant to launch an 'on-site augmented-reality experience' for the 50th commemoration of the events of May 4, 1970; an upcoming program at Cuyahoga Community College tackles the topic of media reliability; and more.

[Case Western Reserve University](#) is teaming up with a company called [RoadPrintz Inc.](#) to help make road-painting "safer, cheaper and faster."

That's how the university in a [news release](#) characterized the goal of a licensing agreement it has signed with RoadPrintz, a company that's the brainchild of CEO Sam Bell, a retired auto mechanic and auto repair-shop owner, and chief technology officer Wyatt Newman, a CWRU professor of electrical engineering and computer science with an expertise in robotics.

Here's how it works, per CWRU's release:

Their technology is incorporated into a special truck equipped with a robotic arm. And a new licensing agreement through Case Western Reserve's Technology Transfer Office provides the so-called university "spin-out" with exclusive rights to make, use and sell the technology or products using the technology.

Construction of a prototype is expected to begin in February and be completed in the spring, said Bell, who spent 40 years running his Cleveland Heights auto-mechanic shop and is a contributing editor at Motor magazine.

The licensing deal is further validation of the promise of the technology from RoadPrintz, which previously received a \$100,000 grant from the Ohio Third Frontier Technology Validation and Start-up Fund and two Great Lakes Innovation & Development Enterprise grants totaling \$100,000.

CWRU said it "owns the patent for certain technology relating to customized robotic road-painting systems and retains an equity stake in the company."

Mike Allan, senior licensing manager in the university's Technology Transfer Office, said in a statement, "What really strikes me is the size of the market opportunity RoadPrintz is attacking. More than \$3 billion is spent annually to paint roads in the United States. But even more impactful is how the company will improve road-worker safety. Anything that can be done to reduce the average of two deaths per day that occur because of work-zone injury crashes in the U.S. is significant."