Ford to License Patented Inflatable Safety Belt Technology to Encourage Expanded Adoption

- Ford to offer intellectual property for inflatable safety belt system that enhances protection for seated passengers – especially children and the elderly

- Wider adoption of inflatable safety belts has the potential to make travel safer and mitigate injuries in other forms of seated-passenger transportation, including military vehicles, aircraft and boats

- Ford introduced the first-ever production automobile rear inflatable safety belts in 2010, and continues to expand availability on Ford and Lincoln brand vehicles

DEARBORN, Mich., May 28, 2014 – Ford Motor Company is offering its patented inflatable safety belt technology to other companies and industries, including competitive automotive manufacturers. The availability of licenses may lead to the wider adoption of inflatable safety belts as other automakers seek to enhance passenger safety. The technology is potentially applicable to other forms of seated-passenger transportation, including military use, and airborne passengers traveling by helicopter or airplane, and even for water travel.

"Ford's longstanding commitment to democratizing technology goes beyond our customers," said Bill Coughlin, president and CEO, Ford Global Technologies. "In this case, the wider adoption of inflatable safety belts has the potential to make travel safer and help mitigate passenger injuries – especially among children and the elderly."

In everyday use, inflatable safety belts operate like conventional safety belts. In a crash, the inflatable safety belt deploys over a vehicle occupant's torso and shoulder to help distribute crash forces up to five times more than a traditional safety belt. Spreading the pressure over a larger area helps reduce pressure on the passenger's chest, and helps control head and neck motion.

The inflatable safety belt is currently available on Ford Explorer, Flex, Fusion and the upcoming 2015 F-150, as well as Lincoln MKT and MKZ for outboard second-row seating positions.

Sharing technology
In addition to this technology, Ford makes many other patented technologies available for license. Some examples of available safety-related technologies are:

- Roll Stability Control™ continuously monitors the vehicle's movement and its relationship to the road surface using a suite of vehicle dynamic sensors including roll rate. RSC automatically applies brakes and/or reduces engine power to help the driver avoid a potential rollover situation
- "Surveillance mode" technology for Ford Police Interceptor was introduced to warn and help protect law enforcement officers from unexpected approaches to their vehicle from the rear

- Ford's Belt-Minder® system was credited by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety with increasing the buckle-up rate by reminding drivers with a persistent chime to wear their safety belts
- Ford's driver alert warning system computes a driver's "attention level" and displays it in the instrument cluster upon request. The system gauges the driver's attention level based on statistical analysis of lane information collected by the forward-looking camera and the vehicle's directional changes. If the calculated driver's attention level falls below a certain threshold (potentially caused by a tired driver), visual and audible warnings are given

These and other technologies are available through Ford's corporate Technology Licensing Portal.

AutoHarvest Foundation
Ford also purchased additional inflatable safety belt patents from United Technologies Corp. to ensure that this technology could be broadly licensed. This effort was made easier with the help of AutoHarvest Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating the adoption of new technologies by providing unprecedented access to innovators and businesses.

"We founded AutoHarvest with the hopes this type of technology sharing could be realized for the betterment of society," said David E. Cole, co-founder and board chairman for AutoHarvest. "We are glad to be able to play a role in spreading this safety technology more broadly."

Ford is a member of the AutoHarvest Innovation Advisory Council along with other leaders in the automotive industry, government and academic research. More information is available at http://autoharvest.org.

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About Ford Motor Company
Ford Motor Company, a global automotive industry leader based in Dearborn, Mich., manufactures or distributes automobiles across six continents. With about 183,000 employees and 65 plants worldwide, the company's automotive brands include Ford and Lincoln. The company provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. For more information regarding Ford and its products worldwide, please visit www.corporate.ford.com.

About AutoHarvest
AutoHarvest Foundation, a 501(C)3 nonprofit, created and operates a unique innovation ecosystem led by some of the most highly respected figures in the automotive and manufacturing industries. In 2012, AutoHarvest.org was launched as the world's only truly neutral and global on-line meeting place for innovators of all types with an interest in advanced manufacturing. This system allows users of all types to showcase capabilities, technologies and needs system-wide and then privately connect with fellow inventors and commercializers to explore technology and business development opportunities of mutual interest. The AutoHarvest interest group consists of over 250 prominent R&D and manufacturing organizations from industry, government and academia. Recently awarded a multi-year grant by the New Economy Initiative Foundation of Southeast Michigan, AutoHarvest is part of the Detroit Regional Innovation Network. For more information visit: www.autoharvest.org.

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