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June 6, 2018 (West Point, Georgia) -- This week, The Ray and WheelRight have upgraded the unique WheelRight drive-through tire safety station to include tire sidewall reading. The WheelRight system previously allowed for tire pressure and tread depth readings, but this additional capability contains all the critical information necessary to describe the tire and identify a suitable replacement. By adding this additional capability, drivers will be able to obtain information about tread depth and pressure specific to their vehicle, identify how much usable life is left on the tire, and where to find a suitable replacement.

The tire sidewall reader is comprised of two towers adjacent to the side of the vehicle in which cameras and lights are housed. As a vehicle passes through, the lights and cameras are triggered, capturing up to 20 images of the rotating tire. Within seconds, these images are subsequently processed using sophisticated computer imaging software to automatically "read" the information embossed on the side of the tire. This data will include the name of the manufacturer and the United States Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) code.

More than 40,000 drivers die in accidents on U.S. roads and highways each year, a 20 percent increase since 2011. U.S. DOT data points to underinflated tires as a cause of crashes that can result in fatalities and injuries. The International Tire and Rubber Association cites tire underinflation as the "single most common" factor in tire failure.

"Saving lives is the most important thing we can do on The Ray," said The Ray's founder and President, Harriet Langford, "the WheelRight system couldn't be easier to use, and it keeps us safe while reducing vehicle-related pollution. By reading the tires' sidewalls, we're giving drivers more information that is even easier to understand so that they can make decisions that are good for their safety and good for their wallets. Now that's a win-win."

The Ray's drive-through tire safety station, WheelRight, reads the tire pressure and tread depth of over 2,500 cars every year, of which 18 percent are underinflated. Those drivers contributed an extra 54,000 tons of CO₂, and used an extra 6,000 gallons of gasoline every year. This is a multifaceted problem that has driver safety, air quality, fuel economy and even national security implications.

"We've had WheelRight installed for over a year, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive - and we're just one installation." said The Ray's Executive Director, Allie Kelly,



"Imagine the impact of tire safety stations across the country at freight depots, school bus parking lots, and bus transit systems!"

"Yet again, The Ray is the first in the USA to showcase our next development on the road to achieving Drive Thru tire check. The addition of our tire sidewall reader will allow us to develop further safety critical tire information to alert drivers of damaged tire sidewalls," said John Catling, founder of WheelRight. "The Ray is a vitally important project as it provides drivers at the Visitor Information Center with a unique opportunity to use this new environmental technology before it becomes more generally available."

This capability is an expansion to the WheelRight system installed in December of 2016 through a partnership between The Ray, Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia (KMMG) and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). WheelRight's sidewall system has been installed at two Esso (ExxonMobil) gas stations in Stuttgart, Germany. The Ray will be the first installation in the United States. The expansion took place the week of June 4th and is open to the public for use, free of charge.

About The Ray

The Ray is the highway of the future - an 18-mile corridor of I-85 in West Georgia. The Ray is named for Ray C. Anderson, the founder of Interface, a carpet manufacturing company and the pioneer of corporate sustainability. Following his death in 2011, the Georgia state legislature name a portion of I-85 between Ray's hometown and the original headquarters of Interface as a memorial highway in his honor. It wasn't long before his youngest daughter, Harriet Anderson Langford, realized the terrible irony of her father's name on a polluting highway. Like Ray, Harriet began asking "What if?" What if a highway could be a zero death, zero waste, and zero carbon corridor? Learn more at www.TheRay.org.

About WheelRight, Ltd.

WheelRight, located in the UK on an Oxford University technology park, was established with a vision to research, develop and commercialize technologies to automate the inspection of tires on any vehicle whilst the vehicle is in motion. Ease of use, accuracy and simplicity are key design criteria for the web-based cloud system. The integrated, cloud technology is working 24/7 in bus and HGV depots across the UK for a range of customers and tested extensively by Highways England. Learn more at www.wheelright.co.uk.