

DID YOU KNOW???

FEEDBACK POSITIVE FROM DRIVER ON AUTOMATED SYSTEMS

I always enjoy feedback from readers of this weekly column but enjoy it most when that feedback is positive, as in this recent case.

In early July I wrote an article entitled “Automated Systems Gaining Driver Acceptance” and went on to describe how more and better automated safety systems are rapidly becoming available on more and more cars, and driver acceptance is growing. That article cited information by researchers at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) which suggested people are most comfortable with systems they believe make smooth, gradual movements but are wary of using the features in the most challenging driving conditions.

It explained how Adaptive Cruise Control maintains a set speed and an appropriate following distance from the vehicle in front of it and that drivers viewed adaptive cruise and Active Lane Keeping somewhat positively. The IIHS research found that drivers said they would be more comfortable using the features in light traffic and on interstates than in stop-and-go traffic and on local roads — conditions under which crashes are more likely.

After that article appeared in the news media, I received an email from a very pleased local driver, who stated in his email:

“I wanted the adaptive cruse (Eyesight) for interstate driving, and am very pleased with its performance there. But I am finding it even more useful in stop and go traffic. While I am always prepared to ‘manually’ stop when needed and it took a while for me to learn that I could trust it, I find it safer and MUCH less stressful.”

This reader also added that his daughter bought a 2018 Impreza last fall, where the sales people failed to convince her of the value of adaptive cruise. He explained to her how well it worked for him, leading her to get it on a mid-level trim package and loves it. It makes her 30-mile commute from the center of Boston to her school in Medfield, MA, much safer and more relaxing. He states that they both enjoy better insurance rates as a result.

Many thanks to this reader for the feedback – it’s worth a lot more than just me touting the automated safety features now available. Automation has the potential to eliminate many crashes by removing human error from the equation, but this can only happen if drivers are comfortable using them. This appears to be the case, at least for this driver and his daughter.