Tennessee auto association to showcase CU-ICAR

FOR THE JOURNAL

GREENVILLE — The story of the runaway success of the Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research was featured at the Tennessee Automotive Manufacturers Association quarterly meeting recently in Nashville, Tenn.

Suzanne Dickerson, director of international business development and marketing, presented a virtual tour of CU-ICAR and showcased how the center is a model of successful public-private partnerships.

The program also featured Jennifer DeWitt, executive director of the South Carolina Automotive Council, an initiative of the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance. The council is housed at CU-ICAR and already has released its first economic impact study on the state's auto industry.

Clemson broke ground at CU-ICAR less than a decade ago. Since then, the center's business model has shown how research universities and private industry can collaborate and combine resources to move research and development forward.

The 250-acre campus includes private-sector research and development facilities and a state-of-the-art graduate education center anchored by four endowed chairs funded by BMW, Michelin and Timken and matched by the state.

CU-ICAR has grown to generate more than $230 million in public and private investments. More than 500 jobs have been created, with another 1,700 announced by newer partners, such as American Titanium Works and Proterra, a maker of electric and hybrid transit vehicles.

Clemson offered the nation's first Ph.D. in automotive engineering, and last September CU-ICAR graduate students unveiled their first concept car, which they designed and built. Called "Deep Orange," the project is an example of Clemson's integrated research, education and collaboration that has received wide national attention.

Dickerson has more than 16 years experience in the automotive industry, including 12 years with BMW. She began her career with BMW in Munich, Germany, upon completion of the prestigious Bosch Foundation Fellowship Program.

She is a board member of the Southern Automotive Women's Forum and the S.C. Automotive Council, and is a member of the Greenville Professional Women's Forum.