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From the Pittsburgh Business Times:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/news/2017/01/31/uber-expects-to-see-more-growth-in-pittsburgh.html>

Uber expects to see more growth in Pittsburgh

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Uber Technologies Inc. has more than 550 employees and growing in Pittsburgh, with at least 100 positions for the ride-sharing service to fill here.

David Richter, Uber's vice president of strategic initiatives, outlined Uber's growth going from almost no employees in Pittsburgh at the beginning of 2015 to the establishment of its Advanced Technology Center around autonomous vehicle technology and operations that include to major Strip District buildings and a new test track in Hazelwood. Richer was the luncheon speaker at the NAIOP Pittsburgh luncheon Tuesday afternoon at the Omni William Penn Hotel in downtown Pittsburgh.

Uber has set up shop in Pittsburgh in order to establish the autonomous vehicle technology the company is working to add to its platform as a more cost-effective method of providing its service, an alternative Richter expects will be a complement to the ride service provided by its drivers.

"Self-driving vehicles are the future not just for Uber but for the automobile industry as a whole," he said.

So far, the company is testing its self-driving Volvos around Pittsburgh with two riders to ensure safety and while new regulations are established in the state. Richter expressed confidence the time is coming in which self-driving cars will become the norm.

"It's a classic tech adoption moment," he said. "It will happen slowly and then suddenly."

Uber's overall growth rate rivals that of Google, just as its expansion in Pittsburgh may surpass it in terms of local headcount, Richter said. Uber has expanded into various buildings in the Strip District and Lawrenceville at a pace that rivals that of Google, which maxed out its office at Bakery Square and helped to spur an expansion of the East End mixed-use development.

Richter again reiterated Uber's biggest motive for its aggressive expansion in Pittsburgh, the talent in robotics and other tech disciplines coming out of Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh.



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Patrick Mondy, who helps to lead the Pittsburgh office for Uber and represents its in its worldwide real estate needs, emphasized the company has no specifics to offer right now on further expansion as it works to build out its presence in the Crucible Building in the Strip District.

“I think what’s great about Pittsburgh frankly is that talent base,” said Richter, ranking it among four or five best cities in the world with the capabilities in robotics and artificial intelligence. “That’s number one with a bullet.”

But he also added it’s also become a more desirable destination to visit and recruit employees, noting that Uber “now has San Francisco-based employees who are opting to move to Pittsburgh.”

Knowing his audience of local commercial real estate professionals, Richter said, “I’m sure we’ll be looking for more real estate.”

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But Richter was clear that Uber has more expansion in Pittsburgh to come.

“We still need more space,” he said.

Tim Schooley

Reporter

Pittsburgh Business Times

