

## Press release

### **HOLON to Establish Autonomous Shuttle Manufacturing Facility in Jacksonville, Florida, Pioneering the Future of Mobility in the United States**

- **HOLON becomes the first automotive OEM to manufacture in the State of Florida with slated production of the first industrialized autonomous, electric shuttles in the U.S. to begin in 2026.**
- **Jacksonville will lead in autonomous mobility with HOLON's new facility, creating 150 initial jobs and potentially generating an estimated 1,000 jobs through the supply chain at scale.**
- **The company will achieve compliance with applicable regulatory requirements, including Buy America, to ensure customers can leverage federal funding to deploy and operate the vehicles on public roads.**
- **HOLON CEO Henning von Watzdorf: "With openness and a supportive regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles, the U.S. offers an ideal environment for HOLON's industrial initiatives."**

**Paderborn (Germany) and Jacksonville (Florida), September 4, 2024.** [HOLON](#), a leading manufacturer of autonomous, electric shuttles purpose-built to revolutionize shared mobility and sustainable transportation, is poised to transform the future of transportation with the launch of its first production plant for autonomous movers in Jacksonville, Florida. This city unveiling was announced today in collaboration with prominent Florida officials and key community stakeholders. HOLON, a subsidiary of global automotive supplier [BENTELER Group](#), will be Florida's first automotive vehicle manufacturer.

The approximately 500,000-square-foot facility will be constructed in Jacksonville, with completion expected in 2026. The developer for the project is VanTrust Real Estate. The plant will be pivotal in advancing HOLON's mission to deliver inclusive, emission-free and sustainable passenger transportation, addressing urban traffic challenges, climate change and demographic shifts.

Henning von Watzdorf, CEO of HOLON, said, "Today marks a significant milestone in the journey of our mover project. With openness and a supportive regulatory framework for autonomous vehicles, the U.S. offers an ideal environment for HOLON's industrial initiatives and Jacksonville has demonstrated tremendous enthusiasm for our vision from the beginning, making the city a national leader in the deployment of autonomous transit. We are deeply grateful to our partners and team for their tireless passion and hard work, which have made—and will continue to make—our expansion into the U.S. a reality."

#### **Automotive-Grade Mover's Market Readiness**

HOLON's mover, a fully electric and autonomous vehicle (AV), is designed to excel in public road use by setting new benchmarks in safety, ride comfort and production quality. The mover is being developed in close collaboration with authorities to ensure it complies with relevant federal requirements, including Buy America and Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS), upon deployment. With a top speed of 37 mph and a capacity for up to 15 passengers, the mover is

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versatile enough for various applications, from on-demand services like ride pooling and ride hailing to regularly scheduled transit operations.

Petr Marijczuk, COO of HOLON, added, "We are thrilled to establish our first U.S. manufacturing plant in Jacksonville, marking a milestone not just for HOLON, but for Florida, the United States, and the global autonomous vehicle industry. After an initial ramp-up phase, HOLON anticipates creating up to 150 jobs by 2027. Our Jacksonville plant will produce approximately 5,000 autonomous movers annually, making them more accessible and quicker to the market worldwide."

"VanTrust is excited to work with HOLON and JAXUSA on this transformative opportunity," said Executive Vice President of VanTrust, Marc Munago.

Prototypes of the mover will be available later this year, with the first vehicles set to be deployed in pilot projects by early 2026. Targeting municipalities, private operators, and institutions such as airports, campuses, planned communities, healthcare facilities and national parks, the early interest in reserving this limited series of prototypes highlights the growing demand for a flexible, cost-effective mobility solution that can adapt to diverse environments and operational needs.

Secretary of the Florida Department of Commerce Alex Kelly and Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan expressed strong support for the initiative, highlighting the positive economic and technological impact on Jacksonville and the broader Florida region.

"With the Governor's leadership in making Florida a top tier manufacturing state, and Florida's subsequent surge in high tech manufacturing jobs since 2019, FloridaCommerce was grateful to partner on this endeavor to bring manufacturing for the autonomous vehicle industry to Northeast Florida," said Florida Secretary of Commerce J. Alex Kelly. "Our collective partnership with JAXUSA, The Florida Chamber, HOLON, Benteler Mobility, and BEEP will signal an important transition for this industry from research and development to high demand, high wage manufacturing jobs in the automobile industry that will additionally create numerous other jobs to support this industry."

"Jacksonville is poised to be an industry leader in the technology behind AI-driven transportation. The addition of autonomous vehicle manufacturing is another big step towards that goal," Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan said. "It complements the Jacksonville Transportation Authority's innovative work in this space and the University of Florida's downtown campus that will offer artificial intelligence degrees in the future. We welcome the jobs, expertise and global recognition that HOLON will bring to Jacksonville."

### **Benteler Mobility and Beep Partner to Deliver Greater Value to Customers**

HOLON's mover will be made available in the U.S. through Benteler Mobility in collaboration with [Beep, Inc.](#), a leading provider of autonomous shared mobility solutions. Benteler Mobility will offer comprehensive services for the purchase and implementation of these cutting-edge autonomous vehicles, while Beep, an Orlando-based company, will provide the services and software to deploy, manage and operate the autonomous vehicles to ensure smooth planning and deployment.

"The future of transportation hinges on the integration of these purpose-built autonomous, electric shuttles into our mobility networks. Beep is leading the industry with our AI-enabled AutonomOS™ platform, which transforms how we plan, deploy and manage autonomous mobility networks.

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HOLON's next generation mover, manufactured locally in the U.S., represents an unprecedented step forward in this field. It will play a key role in reducing congestion, eliminating carbon emissions and improving safety on our roadways," said Joe Moye, CEO of Beep.

"Leveraging HOLON's local manufacturing and the strategic partnership with Beep, we can provide our customers with an integrated, end-to-end solution, starting with the vehicle and spanning all the way to infrastructure enablement, along with attractive financing services," said Tobias Liebelt, General Manager Benteler Mobility.

### **Jacksonville to Become Epicenter of Autonomous Vehicles in the U.S.**

This investment in Jacksonville is key for the city's economic development as it moves to become the epicenter of autonomous vehicles in the United States. "In June of this year, the Jacksonville City Council approved economic development legislation that paved the way for the momentous announcement by HOLON, today," said Immediate-Past Council President Ron Salem. "We look forward to the jobs and financial investment this innovative manufacturing facility will bring to our city."

The [Jacksonville Transportation Authority \(JTA\)](#) continues to test autonomous vehicle technology through pilot programs at Florida State College of Jacksonville, in the Brooklyn neighborhood and other areas across the region. Building on learnings from these projects, JTA is on track to launch the first phase of its Ultimate Urban Circulator (U2C), a comprehensive program to modernize and expand the Skyway in Jacksonville and introduce autonomous vehicles into JTA's transportation system next summer.

"At JTA, we recognized that AVs would have a significant and positive impact across our city and our industry, not only enhancing mobility but also in driving workforce and economic development," said JTA CEO Nat Ford. "Today, that vision moves closer to becoming a reality. Through the JTA's internationally recognized U2C program, we are building a stronger and better-connected Northeast Florida."

"Manufacturing has been the missing piece," JAXUSA Partnership President Aundra Wallace said. "JTA is a national leader with autonomous vehicles and has built strategic partnerships across the industry. HOLON's investment brings the production element to a robust innovation ecosystem in place, and we expect only growth from here on out."

HOLON's new plant in Jacksonville complements its regional headquarters in Auburn Hills, Michigan. The BENTELEER Group, HOLON's parent company, operates six locations across the U.S., employing around 1,700 people. HOLON is planning further expansion with additional production sites in the future.

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### Photo and caption:

*HOLON Manufacturing Plant\_Sketch.jpg*: The approximately 500,000-square-foot facility will be constructed in Jacksonville, with completion expected in 2026.

*HOLON Manufacturing Plant\_Aerial.jpg*: Aerial view of the location of the new HOLON plant.

*HOLON Mover.jpg*: The HOLON Mover is a fully electric, autonomous vehicle for use on public roads. It is one of the world's first movers built to automotive standards – in other words, a leader in safety, ride comfort and production quality.

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### **About HOLON**

HOLON is a subsidiary of the BENTELER Group. With well-founded know-how in automotive technology and industrialization as well as the continuous implementation of new technologies for electromobility, the company develops autonomous movers for the vehicle market of the future. To do this, HOLON works with technology companies, local public transport companies and mobility-as-a-service providers. For more information, visit [www.driveholon.com](http://www.driveholon.com).

### **About JAXUSA Partnership**

JAXUSA Partnership, a division of JAX Chamber, is Jacksonville's regional economic development organization. JAXUSA Partnership recruits new companies and expands existing business to increase high-wage job growth, private capital investment and a highly skilled talent presence in Northeast Florida. The organization works with economic development partners in Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns Counties; the independent authorities of JAXPORT, JAA, JEA and JTA; CareerSource Northeast Florida; and private-sector investors in its mission to be a catalyst for regional economic growth.

### **About JTA**

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority, an independent state agency serving Duval County, has multi-modal responsibilities. JTA designs and constructs bridges and highways and provides varied mass transit services. These include express and regular bus service, alternative mobility options such as ReadIRide, the Skyway, the St. Johns River Ferry, the Gameday Xpress for various sporting events at TIAA Bank Field, Paratransit for the disabled and elderly, and regional services. The JTA's mission is to "enhance Northeast Florida's economy, environment, and quality of life for all by providing safe, reliable, innovative, sustainable, and dignified mobility solutions and facilities."

### **About VanTrust Real Estate**

VanTrust Real Estate is a Kansas City-based, full-service real estate development company, that was recently recognized as NAIOP's 2023 Developer of The Year. Since its founding in 2010, VanTrust has grown into one of the largest privately held commercial real estate companies in the nation. Specializing in office, industrial, multifamily, science + technology and mixed-use development, the company has developed more than \$7 billion of product nationwide and has regional offices in Columbus, Dallas, Phoenix, Jacksonville, and Salt Lake City. For more information, visit [www.vantrustre.com](http://www.vantrustre.com).

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### **About Beep**

Beep, Inc. provides the managed services and software to deliver the next generation of autonomous, electric, shared mobility networks through its AI-enabled AutonomOS™ software platform and mobility-as-a-service offerings. Specializing in planning, deploying and managing autonomous transportation services for private and public communities, Beep safely connects people, places, goods and services with solutions that reduce congestion, eliminate carbon emissions, improve roadway safety and enable mobility for all. Beep utilizes artificial intelligence insights and vast data learnings from its deployments to enhance and advance the safety, rider experience, and operating capabilities of autonomous transportation platforms. For more information, visit [www.ridebeep.com](http://www.ridebeep.com).

### **About Benteler Mobility**

Benteler Mobility focuses on enabling electric and autonomous transportation. With the development of an orchestration platform, Benteler Mobility is positioning itself at the interface between vehicle, service and autonomous operation, thus providing its customers with an all-in-one solution. In addition to working closely with service and infrastructure providers, the company offers innovative asset light financing solutions for fleet customers from the private and public sectors.