

# Wollard International and ThorDrive Announce Strategic Alliance to Produce Fully Autonomous Ground Support Equipment

*The groundbreaking strategic alliance to produce autonomous ground support tractors will deliver enhanced safety and business efficiencies in aviation.*

EAU CLAIRE, WI, USA, February 18, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Wollard International, a leading manufacturer of aviation ground support equipment in North America since 1937 and ThorDrive, a full-stack developer of autonomous driving technology, announce a groundbreaking strategic alliance to produce fully autonomous ground support tractors to transport baggage and cargo for aviation ground handling operations.

After nearly one year of development, Wollard and ThorDrive released a proof-of-concept autonomous ground support tractor in mid-December fully capable of operating in the planeside environment. Using lidar sensors and camera vision, the autonomous tractors have the capability to recognize common objects found in the environment such as aircraft, wing-walkers and other vehicles and safely respond accordingly.

“Our strategic alliance with ThorDrive is an important part of Wollard’s future growth strategy and an opportunity to deliver technologically advanced business efficiencies to our customers that were previously unattainable,” said Tim Taylor, Director of Business Development, Wollard International.



The proof-of-concept tractor, available in Q4 of 2021



According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), damage to ground support equipment, other vehicles and aircraft cost airlines and ground handling operators \$4B globally each year. Additionally, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent annually on injuries to ground support personnel in the US alone.

“Safety is a critical aspect of our technology. Since we adopted it from on-road applications with thousands of miles of safe driving and have access to the planeside environment to develop and perfect our software through our partners at the Cincinnati/N. Kentucky Airport, we can be confident that our autonomous ground support tractors will deliver enhanced safety and business efficiencies for all our customers in the aviation industry and beyond,” said Edward Shelton, VP – Business Development at ThorDrive.

Wollard and ThorDrive intend to maintain an aggressive schedule in 2021, just as they did in 2020. “We intend to upfit one of our new product offerings, the M40e, an all-electric ground support tractor this year and are planning to continue the expansion in the near future with other autonomous tractors performing various planeside functions,” commented Taylor. “In parallel, we intend to complete the final phases of development of the autonomous software technology with the goal of having units available for sale in Q4 of 2021,” added Shelton.

#### About Wollard International:

Every day, for every flight, the mission of Wollard International remains the same — to make aviation operations of every size and description more efficient, reliable, and sustainable. It’s why Wollard is your go-to resource for all the equipment you need to make it happen.

Wollard designs, manufactures, and markets dependable and durable equipment that demonstrates value – every turn, every time. Because we’re purpose-built for this industry, we understand better than anyone the problems that can pile up to delay aviation ramp operations – so we’re out to eliminate them. For more information, visit: [www.wollardintl.com](http://www.wollardintl.com)

#### About ThorDrive:

ThorDrive is a full-stack developer of autonomous driving technology for the aviation, industrial and tier 1 automotive markets. With operations in South Korea and headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio, ThorDrive has developed autonomous solutions for the safe and efficient movement of materials, cargo, baggage and people since 2016. Through industry, manufacturing and customer partnerships, ThorDrive’s main focus is to proliferate their autonomous solutions in industries and with customers that are driven to develop and implement technologies that enhance safety while maintaining a competitive edge. For more information, visit:

[www.thordrive.ai](http://www.thordrive.ai)

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