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Digital Technology replaces mechanical Hand-controls for drivers with disabilities

Sunnyvale, CA - February 18th, 2008 - For the first time in the USA the digital accelerator ring from KEMPF Inc., a Silicon Valley Company, will be presented in Phoenix, AZ at the Annual Convention of the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association from February 20th to 22nd 2008.

Finally drivers with disabilities will be able to drive cars with the same level of safety as any other driver.

Since the 1950s, the standard mechanical hand-controls used by disabled drivers in this country have remained basically the same. Two metal rods are simply bolted to the accelerator and brake pedals to enable a driver without the use of his or her legs to drive a car. A steering knob is attached to the steering wheel, because the driver needs to keep one hand on the hand-control, so only one hand can be used for steering. This leads, after some years of driving, to an increase in shoulder instability. The cost of this instability in shoulder joints is seen by the increasing need to reduce the effort in mobility needs of the disabled driver (ie:power wheelchair, reduced effort steering, reduced effort braking and/or electronic gas and brake systems). Driving with only one hand on the steering wheel is less safe, and the presence of the metal rods in the knee area forces installers to make the airbag in the knee area inoperative and sometimes the steering-wheel airbag as well because of the steering knob.

As a result today in America most drivers with disability are forced to accept a significant reduction in safety due to the installation of their hand-controls.

In France the situation is very different, thanks to the ingenuity of one person, Jean-Pierre Kempf, himself a polio victim at the age of two, who invented the accelerator ring in 1954 to adapt his own car.

Today in France most drivers without the use of their legs drive with an accelerator ring on the steering-wheel, and a main hand brake which doesn't reduce the safety level of their cars because it is built inside the dashboard. It enables them to drive with both hands on the steering wheel, giving them the same comfort and safety as any other driver. All airbags remain functional and no metal parts are added in the knee area.

KEMPF Inc.'s CEO, Martine Kempf, the daughter of Jean-Pierre Kempf, moved to Silicon Valley, California from France 22 years ago to start her own business. As a student she invented a speech recognition system for surgical microscopes used by micro-surgeons in operating rooms and had a hard time starting her company in France. She came to America and started her company with just 5 Dollars in 5 minutes in Sunnyvale, CA. (see People Magazine article from May 26, 1986 copy included).

After the death of her father in 2002, she traveled to France every month to restart her father's company, adapting cars for drivers with disabilities. Today her company in France is thriving, adapting more than 1000 cars per year and its products are recommended by most European car manufacturers (for ex. by Volkswagen in Germany : www.volkswagen-mobil.de Kempf Gasring with picture and link, or by Ford in France : www.ford.fr/ie/mobileasy "Aides a la conduite" with picture of the accelerator ring and links)

This year Kempf is introducing the Digital Accelerator Ring in this country, hoping to revolutionize the world of hand-controls. "It is sad to see that in this great country drivers with disability are forced to accept a reduction in the safety of their cars just because they need hand-controls!" says Kempf, "we will change this with our Digital Accelerator Ring and main hand brake."

KEMPF Inc. just opened a new facility in Tampa Florida this month to perform the installations in cars for drivers with a different mobility.

New address in Tampa :

KEMPF Inc. 225 S. 78th Street Tampa, FL 33619 - Phone : (813) 630-0409 - email : info@kempf-usa.com

High resolution pictures available per email upon request.