

by **Randy Frank**

Contributing Editor

Under the Hood of the 2007 BMW 525i

The award-winning BMW Assist is standard on the BMW 525i as well as all 5, 6 and 7 series BMWs. The 2007 5 series comes with four years of call-in assistance service and several telematics features.

BMW was awarded "Best Consumer Vehicle Application" for the BMW Assist at the 2006 Telematics Update Awards, which are held each year in conjunction with the Telematics Update Detroit Conference. The annual event recognizes companies' performance and contributions to the telematics industry. BMW also received the highest score on the Telematics Research Group's (TRG) Automotive Technology Index. The index measures the availability of key telematics, driver assistance and infotainment technologies across a brand's vehicle lineup. BMW integrated navigation systems with iDrive and voice command were among the reasons the company received the top score.

BMW Assist provides a 24/7 direct connection to the BMW assist response center in the event of an accident or if the driver needs roadside assistance. An overhead button provides the connectivity and onboard GPS technology provides the vehicle's location. In a serious accident, crash sensors automatically trigger the system to initiate a call to the response center and provide the vehicle's location. If the vehicle is stolen, any phone provides access to stolen vehicle recovery services, and the onboard systems assists police in locating the vehicle. As part of BMW Assist, BMW's TeleService allows the car or the driver to communicate the vehicle's service needs to the driver's BMW service center.

BMW Assist uses Bluetooth wireless technology and speech recognition to link to a compatible Bluetooth mobile phone for hands-free calling. Interface options include steering wheel controls, radio keys or voice commands for making or answering calls, as well as browsing or selecting phonebook contacts. With data transfer rates of 2 Mbps, the system uses third-generation



Located directly behind the transmission gear selector, the iDrive controller is easily activated without the driver taking his/her eyes off the road. The menu button behind the controller returns the system to the home screen from any location.

Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS) for the wireless services implemented as part of BMW's iDrive system.

NAVIGATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH IDRIVE

BMW's iDrive system uses an onboard computer, a controller located on the center console and a display mounted in the center of the dashboard for several vehicle functions including communication and navigation as well as entertainment and climate control. Based on compass directions of north, south, east and west, the iDrive system provides easy access to a specific function. These areas are also color coded to quickly identify which system's functions are being displayed:

- North is blue for communication;

- East is green for navigation;
- South is yellow for entertainment; and
- West is red for climate control.

Force feedback on the control knob prevents the driver from rotating the knob further than the available options on the screen. The knob provides a slight kick back as it scrolls through options making the system easier to use while driving and keeps the driver's eyes on the road. Positioned within the driver's field of vision, the dashboard display for iDrive can be viewed while focusing attention on the road. Pushing the knob in a specific direction from the home screen accesses the desired information. From any other screen, pushing the knob in the desired



Pushing the SOS button on the BMW Assist connects the driver directly to the BMW assist response center.

direction and holding it in place for a few seconds moves the function to the specified area. The system includes a button marked menu located behind the control knob that provides quick access to the home screen. ■