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NEW PLUG-IN HYBRID ELECTRIC VEHICLE DEBUTS AT CLEAN ENERGY EVENT

DENVER – A new plug-in hybrid electric vehicle, capable of 125 mpg and receiving electricity from or sending it to the grid, will be available for viewing at “Clean Energy Partnerships.” The event, part of the statewide Colorado’s Tech Week, will be in Fort Collins on Monday, September 18.

The Colorado Governor's Office of Energy Management and Conservation (OEMC) is working with several partners on this project. Hybrids-Plus, Inc. converted a 2006 Toyota Prius into a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) for demonstration purposes. A123Systems supplied the state-of-the-art lithium ion batteries and the U.S. Department of Energy’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and Xcel Energy will perform a benefit analysis of the project.

“Hybrids-Plus, based in Boulder, Colorado, is one of the few companies in the country to offer this conversion. This PHEV demonstration is generating a great deal of interest in other hybrid conversions,” said Drew Bolin, director of OEMC.

The batteries are a new generation of high power lithium ion used for, among other things, cordless power tools, and have been installed as a self-contained battery pack in the rear of the vehicle. The design takes some of the space occupied by a storage tray now in the trunk, but allows access for, and to, the spare tire.

“A123Systems’ improvements in lithium ion battery technology will enable much greater yields in conventional transportation for vehicle mileage in a safe and reliable manner. A123Systems is involved in this PHEV demonstration in order to demonstrate the advantages of this technology and make it available on a wider scale to the public,” said Roger Lin of A123Systems.

This Prius will also soon have Vehicle to Grid (V2G) capability, which means it can provide power to as well as receive power from the electrical grid. A study by Xcel Energy and NREL will assess the collective effects of thousands of PHEVs. Further, the study will determine the emissions profile of the car, as well as those from the greater simulated number, to make recommendations how best to incorporate these new generation vehicles into the electrical grid.

“Xcel Energy is committed to supporting the widespread deployment of plug-in hybrid vehicle technologies and preparing to meet future customer needs related to alternative fuel transportation,” said Michael Lamb, executive director of Utility Innovations at Xcel Energy. “We expect our joint study with NREL will uncover the potential for PHEVs to ultimately increase the overall reliability and sustainability of our existing electricity grid infrastructure.”



“PHEVs can reduce our dependence on foreign oil without costly infrastructure investment,” says Keith Parks, an analyst at NREL. “The electricity used to provide power to these vehicles is already available at every home and business.”

The primary advantage of converting to a PHEV is for better mileage, less oil consumption, and lower driving costs. Additionally, PHEVs can be driven strictly as an electric vehicle during in-town driving or at speeds less than 35 mph, offering another fuel saving feature along with lower tailpipe emissions.

“We were able to place a larger capacity pack in the same location as the original battery pack, and for even greater range we placed cells in unused areas inside the vehicle. We retain the original storage space and spare tire location so that the conversion is next to invisible to the user, except of course for the extended mileage. Although today’s conversion cost is high, that cost as well as installation time, is expected to drop in the next few years by 30 to 50 percent making this technology widely available to businesses and individual consumers alike,” said Carl Lawrence of Hybrids-Plus.

Launch Event for the PHEV Prius Information:

The PHEV Prius will be available for viewing on Monday, September 18th from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Colorado State University Engine and Energy Conversions Laboratory, which is the host site for the “Clean Energy Partnerships” event. For more information on this event and viewing the car, call Megan Castle at (303) 866-2262 or visit <http://www.state.co.us/oemc/press/2006-08-23.pdf>.

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