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Chrysler Group LLC Provides CenterPoint Energy with Test Fleet of PHEV Ram 1500 Pickup Trucks

- Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV) will be supplied to CenterPoint Energy's electric utility in Houston as part of a demonstration project by Chrysler Group LLC
- Real world city miles to be accumulated on demonstration vehicles over the next three years
- Fleet of vehicles developed in partnership with U.S. Department of Energy
- Ram 1500 plug-in electric hybrid test trucks will be used to evaluate city drive cycles, charging performance, fuel economy and real-world performance

October 31, 2011, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Chrysler Group LLC, working in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), will deliver five demonstration fleet Ram 1500 plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) pickup trucks to CenterPoint Energy's electric utility in Houston.

The PHEV Ram 1500 pickups, delivered by Abdullah Bazzi, senior manager of the Chrysler Group's advanced hybrid vehicle project, are part of a national demonstration fleet of 140 vehicles that will be used during the next three years to evaluate customer usage, drive cycles, charging, thermal management, fuel economy, emissions and impact on the region's electric grid. In addition to CenterPoint Energy, seven other partners across the United States are slated to receive vehicles for demonstration and testing purposes.

"Cities and companies have been carefully selected to help the Chrysler Group LLC collect a wide range of data," explained Abdullah Bazzi, senior manager of Chrysler's advanced hybrid vehicle project. "CenterPoint Energy's electric utility in Houston, noted for its hot weather, offers a combination of suburban and rural driving that is ideal as a test cycle for these vehicles. The constant charging will allow us to measure the impact on battery life and charging efficiency."

Chrysler Group LLC has also delivered Ram 1500 PHEV trucks to the city of Yuma, Ariz., to take full advantage of hot weather and conduct thermal testing in the desert southwest. Other cities that have received the demonstration Ram 1500 pickups include San Francisco and Sacramento, Calif., Charlotte, N.C., Boston, Mass., Albany N.Y., and Auburn Hills, Mich .

"We continue to develop expertise in integrating plug-in electric vehicles into the electric grid," said Debbie Korenek, vice president of Marketing and Sales for CenterPoint Energy. "We have worked with the automotive industry for the last five years and this demonstration project continues that effort by providing real world data on the amount of energy used, potential emissions reductions, and impacts to the utility distribution system. The knowledge gained from this project will also provide a better understanding of how to promote the more efficient use of household electricity as a transportation fuel. Long term, we hope to leverage CenterPoint Energy's smart meters and intelligent grid enabling electric vehicles to recharge at off-peak times or when renewable energy resources are more likely to be the source for power generation."

CenterPoint Energy currently has six charging stations and plans to install an additional 10 stations at company facilities throughout its 5,000 square-mile electric service territory.

Strictly a demonstration program, there are no plans for a production version of the PHEV Ram 1500 truck at this time.
Cities and states were selected to evaluate temperature extremes, urban traffic cycles and diverse climates and geographies.

The Ram 1500 PHEV includes a liquid-cooled 12.9kWhr lithium ion battery pack and a 6.6 kilowatt (kW) on-board charger. Additional features include AC power generation of up to 6.6kW; directional charging; reverse power flow and full regenerative braking used to capture more energy. For fuel economy improvements, the front axle of the four-wheel-drive automatic transmission can be disconnected when not needed. The powertrain also includes a 5.7-liter HEMI V-8 engine and a two-mode hybrid transmission. The 5.7-liter Hemi is equipped with a Fuel Saver technology that improves fuel efficiency at highway speeds by shutting down fuel delivery to up to four cylinders.

The battery pack is located under the second-row seat of the pickup and is liquid cooled to help maintain a consistent battery temperature. For on-the-job electrical power tools, a 240 volt/30 amp four-prong outlet and 120volt/20amp duplex outlet power strip is located in the rear box.

Urban use will be tracked to measure battery performance and overall hybrid efficiency with the demonstration fleet of pickups. Other uses include military bases where vehicles will be able to provide power back to the electric grid in what is termed “reverse power flow” of up to 6.6kW.

Funding for the program in part is provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 through the Transportation Electrification Initiative sponsored by the DOE. The grant, totaling $48 million from DOE and $49.4 million from Chrysler Group LLC, was designed to develop vehicles that will be cost efficient for consumers, satisfy safety concerns of daily travel without recharging and help reduce dependence on foreign oil.

The Chrysler Group LLC also is developing a similar fleet of 25 Town & Country minivans with plug-in hybrid technology for demonstration and evaluation that will be allocated to select cities later this year.

About Chrysler Group LLC
Chrysler Group LLC, formed in 2009 from a global strategic alliance with Fiat S.p.A., produces Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Ram, SRT, Fiat and Mopar vehicles and products. With the resources, technology and worldwide distribution network required to compete on a global scale, the alliance builds on Chrysler Group’s culture of innovation, first established by Walter P. Chrysler in 1925, and Fiat’s complementary technology that dates back to its founding in 1899.

Headquartered in Auburn Hills, Mich., Chrysler Group’s product lineup features some of the world's most recognizable vehicles, including the Chrysler 300, Jeep Wrangler, Dodge Challenger and Ram 1500. Fiat contributes world-class technology, platforms and powertrains for small- and medium-size cars, allowing Chrysler Group to offer an expanded product line including environmentally friendly vehicles.

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