

Media Advisory – Dec. 1, 2008

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County converts hybrids to all-electric vehicles

Snohomish County has converted two of its Toyota Prius hybrid vehicles to fully electric vehicles as part of the Plugin Center PHEV Pilot Project of Washington.

The vehicles were fitted with plug-in electric conversion kits, as well as data monitors, in November at Wenatchee Valley College's automotive training facility. The two vehicles can be parked and charged at the county's McDougall fleet shop, parking garage and Cathcart fleet center.

The conversion kits use lithium battery packs charged via standard 120-volt outlets. Under optimal conditions, the battery packs provide an all-electric equivalent range of approximately 30 miles. Recharging an empty battery takes about 5.5 hours.

Each vehicle also is equipped with data loggers, GPS units and cellular modems to collect real-time vehicle performance data. The data will be analyzed and archived by Idaho National Laboratory (INL) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Energy's Advanced Vehicle Testing Activity. Data from Snohomish County's vehicles will be studied along with information from about 130 other converted vehicles nationwide.

Snohomish County has continually been working to reduce its impact on the environment, especially in terms of fleet improvements. The county recently received a \$57,299 state grant to retrofit 24 diesel vehicles, further reducing the county's overall pollution emissions. Since 2005, emission-reduction improvements have been made to an additional 109 diesel vehicles.

Snohomish County also was recently honored as the third best government green fleet in North America by 100 Best Fleets, a national award co-sponsored by Government Fleet Magazine and other fleet organizations.

The statewide PHEF Pilot Project is sponsored by Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) and the Port of Chelan County.

Wenatchee, Chelan County, Douglas County PUD, Energy Northwest, Snohomish County, the University of Washington, Benton County PUD, Walla Walla Community College, McKinstry and Green IT Alliance are participating in this phase of the pilot project. Each organization provided its own vehicles.

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