

NEW EDITION OF ACEEE'S GREEN BOOK(r) ONLINE IDENTIFIES MOST ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY VEHICLES OF 2006

Washington, DC (February 14, 2006): Amid dramatic changes in the U.S. vehicle market and continued concerns about U.S. oil dependence, the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) today announced the year's "greenest" and "meanest" vehicles, along with the environmental scorings of all model year 2006 cars and passenger trucks.

The vehicle scores are part of ACEEE's Green Book(r) Online, the ninth annual edition of ACEEE's environmental guide to cars and trucks, available online at GreenerCars.com.

Capturing the "greenest vehicle" title with a photo-finish this year is the hybrid-electric Honda Insight. In second place is the natural gas-powered Honda Civic GX, while the Toyota Prius, Honda Civic Hybrid, and Toyota Corolla round out the top five. Although the Ford Escape Hybrid -- last year's notable newcomer -- was pushed off this year's top twelve list by a number of new, low-emitting conventional cars, hybrids as a whole continue to perform well, taking three of the top four spots overall and placing at or near the top of many vehicle classes.

"In the world of green vehicles, hybrids are still the team to beat, as they generally have better fuel economy and cleaner emissions than other models in their respective classes," stated author and principal vehicle analyst James Kliesch, a Research Associate at ACEEE.

"Nonetheless, consumers should be aware that having 'hybrid' in the name doesn't necessarily mean the vehicle will be green." As automakers look to take advantage of the hybrid buzz, experts are concerned that the focus of hybrid design may shift from saving fuel to simply further increasing vehicle power.

Widely regarded as the pre-eminent buyer's guide to environment-friendly passenger cars, trucks, and SUVs, GreenerCars.com provides the facts necessary to examine the eco-performance of any 2006 model. Vehicles are analyzed on the basis of a "Green Score," a singular measure that incorporates unhealthy tailpipe emissions, fuel consumption, and the emissions of gases that cause global warming.

The GreenerCars.com Web site also identifies top widely available models in each vehicle class. This "Greener Choices" list includes larger vehicles, such as the Ford Escape Hybrid SUV, Honda Odyssey minivan, and Toyota Tundra pickup. Passenger cars such as the Hyundai Sonata and Ford Focus Wagon also top their respective classes. As the list demonstrates, consumers can make "greener choices," whether they need a sedan, minivan, pickup truck, or SUV.

While keeping pace with increasingly stringent federal tailpipe emissions requirements, U.S. manufacturers captured the top scoring position in only four of the fourteen vehicle classes. "Unfortunately, the domestic manufacturers are not closing the gap with the leading foreign manufacturers on fuel economy," noted Therese Langer, ACEEE's Transportation Program Director. "Detroit has had a difficult year, but given high gasoline prices and shifting consumer preferences, offering more fuel-efficient vehicles is not a luxury -- it's a business necessity."

The "Meanest Vehicle for the Environment," for the second consecutive year, goes to the 8.3-liter, 500-horsepower Dodge Ram SRT10 pickup truck. Rounding out the "bottom 5" are the Lamborghini Murcielago, Bentley Arnage, Dodge Durango, and Dodge Ram 1500 pickup. Other prominent models on the "meanest" list include the Hummer H2, Ford F-250 pickup, GMC Yukon XL K2500, Volkswagen Touareg, and Chevrolet Suburban K2500.

"Last month, the Energy Department almost doubled its long-term oil price forecast," noted Bill Prindle, ACEEE's Policy Director. "That means gasoline prices will continue their upward trend. At the same time, the signs of global warming are clearer than ever. Simply by choosing the most efficient vehicle in each class, we could cut our average gasoline bill by \$510 a year, while cutting carbon emissions more than 30 percent. So whether it's for your pocketbook or for the planet, there has never been a better time to buy a green vehicle."

In addition to highlighting the year's "Greenest," "Meanest," "Greener Choices," and best-in-class lists, the GreenerCars.com Web site contains informational write-ups on model year 2006 highlights, a consumer primer on vehicles and the environment, and advice on how to buy green when shopping for a new car or truck.

Available to subscribers of the ACEEE's Green Book(r) Online interactive database are summary "Green Scores" of the 1,100+ configurations of all model year 2006 vehicles, along with each configuration's fuel economy, health-related pollution impacts, global warming emissions, and estimated fuel expenses. Subscribers to ACEEE's Green Book(r) Online can also build custom lists for comparing vehicles. Monthly and annual subscriptions to ACEEE's Green Book(r) Online are available at GreenerCars.com. Press materials are available from ACEEE Publications.

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