

For immediate release: January 12, 2012

PSTA's New Hybrid Cars Hit the Streets!

Who: Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority

What: Replacing 10 standard gasoline cars with new hybrid-electrics

Why: To reduce fuel use, pollution and America's dependence on foreign oil

Where: Throughout the Tampa Bay area

When: Now



In 2009, the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)

rolled out its first ever diesel-electric hybrid vehicles, branded as *SmartBuses*. Agency leaders decided that investing in the environmentally friendly and fuel-saving hybrid technology was the best move for both PSTA and the community. With those first 10 hybrid buses (along with an additional 14 purchased with stimulus funds in 2010) showing a 40% improvement in fuel efficiency, PSTA leaders decided that it was time to take advantage of that hybrid technology for the agency's cars as well. So last September, the PSTA Board of Directors agreed to purchase 10 new Ford Fusion hybrid sedans to replace agency cars that have exceeded their useful life. Like their hybrid bus counterparts, the agency has branded its new hybrid sedans as *SmartCars*.

"We have a fleet of 36 sedans that are shared by staff for a multitude of purposes," says PSTA CEO Brad Miller. "Staff cars are used by supervisors who are on the road throughout the day. They are also used to shuttle drivers to and from buses along the routes as well as getting staff to and from meetings throughout the region and state." Such vehicles are integral parts of all transit agencies and with gas prices expected to hit \$4.00 a gallon by summer, PSTA's new hybrid cars are expected to really help cut the agency's annual gasoline costs. PSTA currently buys more than 41,000 gallons of gasoline a year and agency leaders are eager to see that number drop thanks to the new *SmartCars*, which are now hitting the streets. The hybrid *SmartCars* were purchased through a state consortium at a cost of just under \$25,000 each and are projected to get a whopping 41 miles to the gallon in city driving. That's nearly twice the average mileage of PSTA's most fuel efficient standard cars.

"These cars are really something," says PSTA Spokesperson Bob Lasher. "The engines don't run at all when the car is at a stoplight or moving slowly. It's really easy to see why these cars save so much on fuel and significantly reduce emissions." If PSTA's new *SmartCars* are as successful as their hybrid bus counterparts, area residents should expect to see even more *SmartCars* on the road in the coming years.

For additional information or interviews, please contact:

Bob Lasher
Manager of Community Relations
blasher@psta.net

(727) 540-1874 Office

(727) 580-7135 Cell

#

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority is the public transit provider for Pinellas County carrying more than 13.1 million riders a year. PSTA operates nearly 40 bus and trolley routes with a fleet of 188 vehicles. To learn more about the services offered by PSTA, or for schedule and fare information, passengers are invited to call the PSTA InfoLine at (727) 540-1900, or visit www.PSTA.net. PSTA is an equal opportunity employer.