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DaimlerChrysler Demonstrates Hybrid Technology In Popular Jeep® Liberty SUV

December 19, 2001, Washington D.C. -

DaimlerChrysler today showed a hybrid electric version of its popular sport-utility vehicle, the Jeep® Liberty, demonstrating the adaptability of the company's patented Through-the-Road (TTR) hybrid system.

The Liberty HEV achieves a 30 percent improvement in fuel efficiency compared with a conventional six-cylinder Liberty, without sacrificing the vehicle's utility, comfort or performance.

"The Liberty HEV demonstrates how our TTR hybrid system can be adapted to many different types of vehicles," said Larry Oswald, Vice President and head of DaimlerChrysler's Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Product team.

"The TTR can be installed in vehicles of different styles and sizes, with front- or rear-wheel drive," Oswald said. "This gives us great flexibility as we continue to explore new applications for environmentally-friendly hybrid technology."

The Liberty HEV is equipped with a 2.4 liter I4 gasoline engine that drives the rear wheels. A 40 kW nickel metal hydride battery and an electric motor provide additional power to the front wheels when needed for acceleration. Because the electric motor provides additional power when needed, a smaller internal combustion gas engine can be used, resulting in increased fuel efficiency.

Fuel efficiency is further enhanced by regenerative braking in which energy normally lost as heat during deceleration and braking is captured to recharge the battery.

The system is called TTR (Through-the-Road) because there is no physical connection between the front and rear axles or the engine and motor. The two are controlled and coordinated by computer, responding to changes the vehicle's traction coupled through the road.

The vehicle's 0-60 mph performance is comparable to the conventional six-cylinder Liberty. The hybrid powertrain adds about 350 pounds to the weight of the vehicle, but does not intrude on passenger or cargo space. The hybrid powertrain provides four-wheel-drive capability.

In November 1999, DaimlerChrysler unveiled its first vehicle with the TTR hybrid powertrain, the Dodge Durango HEV. DaimlerChrysler will market its first TTR vehicles in 2003.

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