



Tampa Bay region plugs-in as leader in electric vehicles

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., June 22, 2010 - The Tampa Bay area today joined other leading metropolitan areas developing electric vehicle “plug-in ready” communities, as it officially launched Project Get Ready Tampa Bay. The regional collaboration includes the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, local governments, the Rocky Mountain Institute, Progress Energy Florida, Tampa Electric and Florida Power & Light.

The project, part of a national non-profit effort, kicked off at Tropicana Field with several business and civic leaders including St. Petersburg Mayor Bill Foster, Clearwater Mayor Frank Hibbard and Hillsborough County Commissioner Rose Ferlita. The kick-off featured plug-in electric hybrid cars and trucks including the Chevy Volt, Toyota Prius and Ford Escape.

“Tampa Bay is an important piece of this national program because of its large population, moderate density and mass transportation potential,” said Avera Wynne, planning director of the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. “This project can build the framework for a large-scale roll-out of plug-in electric vehicles in the coming years.”

In partnership with the electric utilities in the region, Get Ready Tampa Bay will work to develop the technology and infrastructure necessary to support the widespread usage of electric vehicles to ensure that there are few obstacles for consumers interested in using electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs).

As the car industry and the federal government turn their sights on electric vehicles, cities and regions that demonstrate they are getting “plug-in ready” will attract vehicle manufacturers to launch in their area. Project Get Ready aims to make Tampa Bay just such an area.

The United States has a goal of having at least one million plug-in electric vehicles on the road in the next five years. Get Ready Tampa Bay will help identify potential challenges and develop solutions to make this goal a reality. The use of electric transportation will reduce our regions dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“Tampa Bay is among leaders in the country such as Houston, Kansas City, Raleigh and Indianapolis, that are debunking the myth that plug-in electric vehicles will be ushered in only by densely populated cities or on the West Coast,” said Matt Mattila, Rocky Mountain Institute® Project Get Ready manager.

Findings from the Tampa Bay area likely will have broad implications for transportation planning for other cities throughout the United States pursuing plug-in electric vehicle initiatives.

Get Ready Tampa Bay is a regional collaboration between the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, local governments, Rocky Mountain Institute, Progress Energy Florida, Tampa Electric, Florida Power & Light, business partners, and other groups interested in preparing Tampa Bay for the roll-out of electric vehicles in the next few years. Cities and regions that demonstrate they are getting “**plug-in ready**” will attract the vehicle manufacturers to launch in their area. For more information on Get Ready Tampa Bay, visit <http://getreadytampabay.org/>.

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