News Release

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WANT TO GO GREEN? AAA RECOMMENDS WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE BEHIND THE WHEEL

AAA provides tips for those looking to be more eco-friendly with their driving habits and next vehicle purchase

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va., (May 9, 2012) – Hoping to decrease your carbon footprint and live a greener life? What and how you drive is a large part of your daily carbon footprint. Electric engines, several hybrid options and even traditional internal combustion engines have become more efficient and emit fewer greenhouse gases. Even if you're not in the market for a new car, AAA has tips to help you get the best efficiency and minimize greenhouse gases no matter what you drive.

"There has been an influx of 'green' technologies by automakers into the market, which is great for consumers seeking a more environmentally-conscious choice for their next vehicle purchase," said Georjeane Blumling, Vice President of Public Affairs for AAA Tidewater Virginia. "Additionally, motorists not currently in the market for a new car can also make a difference by simply adjusting driving habits."

The market for green cars is strengthening. Below are technologies to keep a look out for when in the market for a 'green' vehicle:

Electric Power
2012 has been an exciting year for full-electric vehicles (EV). These vehicles do not use gasoline and rely solely on battery power. With the average cost for a kilowatt hour of electric energy at approximately 12 cents, to fully charge an EV with a 24KWh battery pack would cost around $2.88. That works out to between 3.0 cents and 4.4 cents per mile for fuel. Making EV's even more appealing and green; there is no need for oil changes, ignition system maintenance, fuel system service or exhaust pipe and muffler replacements. A stand out in this category is the **Nissan Leaf**.

Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicles
Similar fuel economy can be realized in plug-in hybrid powertrains. These vehicles use a rechargeable battery pack that allows the car to travel up to 35 miles before the onboard gasoline engine starts. In some cars, this engine will provide power to the drive wheels. In other models this engine powers a generator that delivers power to the motor driving the vehicle while also recharging the batteries. Unlike fully electric vehicles, a plug-in hybrid is limited only by the range of its gas tank. The **Toyota Prius PHEV** and **2013 Ford Fusion** are great examples of plug-ins in the marketplace today.

Gasoline-Electric Hybrids
Hitting the market hard in 2012, gasoline-electric hybrids like the **Nissan Altima Hybrid** and **Honda Civic Hybrid** use a gasoline engine and an electric motor. A full or parallel hybrid can run on either the gasoline or electric motor or use both for maximum performance. A mild hybrid uses the electric motor to aid the gasoline engine, which must always be running when the car is moving. Full hybrids can travel on electric power alone. Hybrids never need to be plugged into a wall outlet or external charging station to keep the batteries at full power. The gasoline engine that powers the car also handles the task of recharging the batteries.

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Compressed Natural Gas/Diesel Vehicles

Vehicles running on compressed natural gas (CNG) marry efficiency with markedly reduced tailpipe emissions. While many gasoline-powered vehicles have been converted to run on compressed natural gas, which is relatively abundant and produced in the United States, the **Honda Civic GX** is the only sedan that comes from the factory with this ability. CNG vehicles use a standard piston engine.

Diesels are not often thought of as being "green," but the latest generation of diesel vehicles produce fewer tailpipe emissions and significantly reduce carbon dioxide output. Today's diesels are so clean they meet environmental standards in all states, including those that have adopted the more stringent California emissions rules. Among diesel powered cars, the **Audi A3** is a standout.

Don't forget More Efficient Gasoline Vehicles

Manufacturers are even updating or planning to update their current models to be environmentally friendly. **Ford** has launched their EcoBoost engines that use turbo charging technology, making it possible to use smaller, more fuel efficient engines that are still able to provide the levels of acceleration needed for safe merging and passing. The **Chevrolet Cruze** and new **Dodge Dart** will also offer turbocharged four-cylinder engines in place of larger and less economical engines.

For motorists that are not in the market for a new car, but want to decrease their carbon footprint, AAA suggests the following simple changes to lessen the impact of transportation on the environment:

- Slow down. Decreasing vehicle speed by 10 mph can significantly increase fuel efficiency and decrease the associated carbon dioxide output.
- Drive at a steady pace and anticipate traffic patterns. Accelerating rapidly then having to brake, wastes fuel and causes brakes to wear more quickly.
- Plan your route in advance. Consolidate trips whenever possible and plan to travel during lighter traffic times.
- Remove unneeded items from the trunk and avoid using the roof rack. Added weight and air resistance will cause more fuel to burn.
- If your car has an "ECO" setting, use it. It will smooth out your gas pedal inputs; optimize transmission shift points and decrease air conditioners impact on the engine.

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