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FedEx Orders Composite Reach Commercial Vans From Isuzu and Utilimaster

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Aerodynamic, Light-Weight Design Saves Fuel and Lowers Emissions

ANAHEIM, Calif., Nov. 11, 2011 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Isuzu Commercial Truck of America, Inc., distributor of America's best-selling low-cab-forward trucks, and Utilimaster Corporation, a leading manufacturer of walk-in vans and commercial truck bodies for the delivery and service marketplace and a subsidiary of Spartan Motors, Inc. (Nasdaq:SPAR), today announced that FedEx Express has placed a large order for the all-new Reach commercial walk-in van. The vehicles, which provide both economic and environmental benefits, are to be delivered to FedEx by the end of 2011.

FedEx Express, the world's largest express transportation company, has been operating five Reach pilot vehicles on multiple delivery routes in Arkansas, Tennessee and Michigan since the van's introduction in March 2011.

The Reach is a smaller, more fuel efficient vehicle that can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 11 tons (or 22,000 lbs.) per vehicle per year. The improved fuel economy and reduced carbon footprint are the result of an aerodynamic, light-weight composite body designed by Utilimaster atop a rugged Isuzu NPR ECO-MAX chassis powered by Isuzu's 3.0-liter diesel engine.

"We have been working with Utilimaster and Isuzu since conception to develop a long-life, fuel efficient vehicle that supports the FedEx strategic sustainability objectives. They right-sized the engine down to a more fuel efficient three liters and reduced weight with composite material while maintaining a strong chassis and a spacious interior," said Dennis Beal, vice president of Global Vehicles at FedEx Express. "The vans are performing well on our routes, and reducing our fuel costs as well as our carbon footprint."

In addition to delivering up to 35 percent better fuel economy* than a traditional commercial van, the Reach also meets the most stringent emissions standards in the world. Isuzu's 4JJ1-TC engine comes with Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) technology with Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) injection reducing NOx levels in engine exhaust by 85 percent.

"We are thrilled that FedEx has recognized the potential of the Reach to offer fuel economy, durability and true commercial truck performance," said Shaun Skinner, executive vice president and general manager of Isuzu Commercial Truck of America. "Today's fleet and vocational buyers are looking for low cost of ownership, and this order proves that the Reach lives up to its name—it reaches a new standard in low cost of operation compared to traditional step vans."

Utilimaster guided the development of the Reach's aerodynamic shape and conducted extensive wind tunnel testing that indicated the vehicle cuts through the air with a drag coefficient that is 13.1 percent lower than current competitive vans. The aerodynamic design, along with the use of composite materials, contributes to improved fuel efficiency and reduced interior noise. The lightweight composite materials provide a 700-pound weight savings compared to traditional aluminum and steel materials.

"The Reach provides a 35 percent improvement in fuel efficiency over alternative delivery trucks, which supports FedEx in attaining their 20 percent fuel efficiency improvement goal as part of their environmental policy," stated John Forbes, president of Utilimaster. "Our development team has worked closely with FedEx stations to review vehicle fuel economy and route performance on a monthly basis. The results are very positive. The Reach vans are operating on the most extreme delivery routes and performing very well."

The Reach is available through Isuzu's nationwide network of 300 dealers.

Additional Reach information and images are available at www.nextgenerationvan.com.

*Compared to class 3-5 commercial walk-in vans; testing conducted by independent, certified party.

About Isuzu

Isuzu Motors Limited is one of the world's largest manufacturers of medium- and heavy-duty trucks. Since building its first truck in 1918, Isuzu has sold over 26 million trucks worldwide. Among its innovations are the first air-cooled diesel engine in 1936, the first two-ton low-cab-forward truck in 1959, and the first direct-injection diesel engine.

Headquartered in Anaheim, California, Isuzu Commercial Truck of America, Inc. (ICTA), is the distributor of Isuzu commercial vehicles in the United States. Isuzu commercial trucks have been the best-selling low-cab-forward trucks in America every year since 1986. For more information, call (866) 441-9638 or visit www.isuzucv.com.

About Utilimaster

Utilimaster, www.utilimaster.com, a subsidiary of Spartan Motors, Inc. (Nasdaq:SPAR), is a leading manufacturer of walk-in vans and commercial truck bodies for the delivery and service marketplace. Utilimaster designs, develops and manufactures products to customer specifications for use in the package delivery, one-way truck rental, bakery/snack delivery, utility, and linen/uniform rental businesses. The company serves a diverse customer base and also sells aftermarket parts and accessories.

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