



1541 Reynolds Rd. Charlotte, MI 48813

P: 517.543.6400

**SPARTANMOTORS.COM**

## **Find It All — Within the Reach(TM)**

March 8, 2011

### **Utilimaster and Isuzu Introduce the Future of Commercial Van Fuel Efficiency**

INDIANAPOLIS, Mar 8, 2011 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX) --

The Utilimaster Corporation (Wakarusa, IN), a subsidiary of Spartan Motors, Inc. (Nasdaq: SPAR), announced today that the Reach, a commercial van offering over 35 percent better fuel efficiency, made its world debut today at the 2011 National Truck Equipment Association's (NTEA) The Work Truck Show.

Executives from the Utilimaster Corporation and Isuzu Commercial Truck of North America conducted a joint unveiling at the opening of the The Work Truck Show before a large audience. This commercial van is offered with three sizes of 450, 530, 640 cubic feet of cargo capacity and is scheduled for full production in the second half of this year.

This is the first commercial van to effectively meet the needs of two market segments. The durability, cargo capacity, fuel efficiency and extensive green features make it the best business decision for large fleets. But it is the modular commercial vocational packages -- designed to take full advantage of the van's expansive aisle width and headroom -- that give the Isuzu Dealer network a no-compromise solution for the thousands of fleets they serve in North America.

The Reach sets a new engineering and design standard in the commercial van market by delivering significant improvements across five performance vectors: (i) cost of ownership, (ii) capacity/efficiency, (iii) durability, (iv) green, (v) safety. No opportunity was overlooked -- from the class-leading fuel efficiency all the way down to the auto-opening bulkhead door -- the Reach has it all.

#### **Cost of ownership**

- Isuzu's world-proven 4JJ1-TC clean diesel technology utilizes an intercooled turbocharger and delivers over a 35% improvement\*\* in fuel-efficiency
- Larger fleets can realize a fuel savings of up to \$3,000 per vehicle per year
- Corrosion-resistant, composite construction saves 600 lbs. per vehicle

#### **Capacity/efficiency**

- Improved door configuration and lower step heights yields faster entry / egress for improved productivity
- Cargo area offers 13 inches of additional aisle width which is 50% greater than other vehicles in this class
- Easily accessible from the driver's seat, the class-leading cargo area allows operators over six feet tall to walk in and out of the van in an upright position
- 450 -- 630 cu. ft. of cargo capacity and 4,200 lbs. of payload capacity
- Modular vocational packages afford buyers a choice of factory or field-installed options, that are designed to take full advantage of the van's expansive aisle width and headroom

## Durability

- Isuzu's 4JJ1-TC clean diesel offers a long-life 310,000 mile B10 powertrain rating++
- Rugged Isuzu NPR ECO-MAX chassis
- Body-on-frame design provides for lower maintenance and accident repair costs
- Impact-resistant, molded lower panels are designed for quick removal and replacement

## Green/Sustainability

- Isuzu's 4JJ1-TC engine reduces carbon dioxide emissions by more than 11 tons (or 22,000 lbs.) per vehicle per year
- Front wheelwells, stepwell liners, and other parts are made from durable recycled materials
- 13.1% more aerodynamic than other commercial vans of this class
- One-piece roof assembly and water channels provide a superior cargo area seal

## Safety

- Safety hand rails at each door and available integrated backup camera
- "High-visibility" steps positioned lower (both sides and rear door) with slip-resistant carbide tread
- LED lighting illuminates more effectively and offers enhanced durability
- Keyless door and auto-opening bulkhead door improves driver safety and efficiency
- "Quiet Cab" is up to 6 times quieter than competitive vehicles in this class\*

Images and additional information can be found at [www.NextGenerationVan.com](http://www.NextGenerationVan.com).

The Reach redefines what green/sustainability means in the commercial van segment. The vehicle's dramatic profile is indicative of the importance placed on aerodynamics. The streamlined shape, along with the use of light-weight composite materials, improves fuel efficiency, while reducing drag by 13.1 percent. Reduced gross vehicle weight and enhanced cargo capacity are also the direct result of utilizing the light-weight and compact composite materials.

"The commercial vehicle market was clearly signaling the need for lower cost of ownership. These clients desired a long-life van that attains the fuel efficiency of a hybrid without the complexity and cost. The Reach van is the answer to managing a better return for each deployed asset," states John Marshall, Utilimaster Senior Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Business Development. "The Reach van creates a new threshold of fleet performance."

The introduction of this purpose-built commercial van is the culmination of market-driven New Product Development (NPD) process which included extensive voice-of-the-customer design/performance requirements at multiple intervals. Product clinics, ethnography and quantitative research were deployed at the onset, but the NPD process also integrated specific duty-cycle inputs and other customer requirements. Product Engineers rode with end-users and shadowed fleet vehicles. This robust NPD approach, along with the combined disciplines and competencies of Isuzu and Utilimaster, were critical to improving the Reach value proposition across all vehicle dimensions.

"The Reach will truly revolutionize today's commercial fleet and commercial markets. It is a groundbreaking new design that offers an unmatched value proposition due to a lower cost of operation, exceptional durability, superior cargo capacity and a myriad of green features -- all supported by the Isuzu distribution network. The Reach has been designed for those customers who need to manage fiscal matters and also are committed to higher levels of sustainability," said John Szykiel, President and CEO of Spartan Motors. "For decades, thousands of customers, particularly in the commercial van segment, have been forced to settle for a product that was fundamentally designed for consumer use. With the introduction of the Reach, those days are over as this product can meet the needs of both B2B and B2C."

The Reach represents the culmination of a multi-year collaborative effort between the Utilimaster Corporation, North America's largest vocational and fleet vehicle solutions provider, and Isuzu Commercial Truck of North America, a

global leader in diesel engine manufacturing. It is also a manifestation of Spartan Motors blended top-line growth strategy consisting of organic growth (the Reach introduction), corporate alliances (relationship with Isuzu) and M&A (acquisition of Utilimaster).

\*\* Compare to class 3 -- 5 commercial walk-in vans: testing conducted by an independent, certified party

\* Class 3 -- 5 commercial walk-in vans

++ 90% of 4JJ1-TC engines will reach that mileage before requiring an overhaul

#### ABOUT UTILIMASTER:

Utilimaster ([www.utilimaster.com](http://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 market place. 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. Visit Utilimaster at [www.utilimaster.com](http://www.utilimaster.com).

#### About Spartan Motors

Spartan Motors, Inc. designs, engineers and manufactures specialty chassis, specialty vehicles, truck bodies and aftermarket parts for the recreational vehicle (RV) emergency-response, defense, government services, delivery and service markets. The Company's brand names -- Spartan(TM), Crimson Fire(TM), Crimson Fire Aerials(TM) and Utilimaster(R) - are known for quality, value, service and first-to-market innovation. The Company employs approximately 1,500 at facilities in Michigan, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Indiana and Texas. Spartan reported sales of \$481 million in 2010 and is focused on becoming a global leader in the design, engineering and manufacture of specialty vehicles and chassis. Visit Spartan Motors at [theshyftgroup.com](http://theshyftgroup.com).

#### ABOUT ISUZU:

Isuzu Motors Limited (Isuzu) 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](http://www.isuzucv.com).

This news release was distributed by GlobeNewswire, [www.globenewswire.com](http://www.globenewswire.com)

SOURCE: Spartan Motors, Inc.

CONTACT: Joseph Nowicki, CFO  
Spartan Motors, Inc.  
(517) 543-6400  
[Joseph.Nowicki@spartanmotors.com](mailto:Joseph.Nowicki@spartanmotors.com)  
Russell Chick, Corporate Director of Marketing  
Spartan Motors, Inc.  
(517) 543-6400  
[Russell.Chick@spartanmotors.com](mailto:Russell.Chick@spartanmotors.com)