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Utilimaster Innovation Develops Most Fuel-Efficient Walk-in Van

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INDIANAPOLIS, March 4, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Utilimaster Corporation](#) (the "Company"), a subsidiary of [Spartan Motors, Inc.](#) (Nasdaq:SPAR), is launching a new, highly fuel-efficient walk-in van called the VELOCITY. The VELOCITY provides lower total cost of ownership through lower initial cost, improved fuel economy, and a walk-through design that enhances driver productivity and safety.

The VELOCITY, built on a Ford Transit cutaway chassis, debuted today (March 4) during the 2015 Work Truck Show in Indianapolis, Indiana. Executives from Utilimaster unveiled the VELOCITY at the opening of The Work Truck Show before a large audience. The VELOCITY allows full stand-up height, cargo capacities of 574, 679 and 784 cubic feet, and is scheduled for full production in the third quarter of this year.

"Commercial vehicle customers approached us with the need for lower cost of ownership and improved productivity," stated John Forbes, President of Utilimaster. "Customers desired a large entry door for ease of entry and exit on multi-stop routes, improved fuel efficiency, and flexibility of configuring the cargo space for various applications. The VELOCITY is the answer to driving a better return on investment for each deployed asset."

The VELOCITY is the first walk-in van developed to support the Ford Transit gas, diesel or CNG/LPG platforms. The design offers rear swing or roll-up doors for dock loading, a robust curbside sliding door, low entry and egress steps, and optimized ergonomics for managing commercial deliveries and service routes.

The VELOCITY continues the Utilimaster history of innovation and improved performance in design.

Cost of Ownership

- Cost of ownership over seven years is nearly half the cost of a traditional walk-in van
- Initial acquisition cost is 15% lower than a traditional walk-in van
- Operators realize a \$3,000 fuel savings per vehicle at 20,000 miles per year when compared to a traditional walk-in van
- Improved driver productivity - walk-in design saves 30 seconds for entry and egress per stop when compared to traditional passenger cab door

Safety

- Largest entry steps and bus type hand rail in the industry
- Steps positioned lower to the ground for ease of entry/egress minimizing operator strain
- Curbside entry and exit to avoid entering traffic
- Flat floor throughout, from cab area to cargo area
- Rear grip strut step bumper
- Three points-of-contact hand rail

Green/Sustainability

- Standard Ford 3.7L V6 gasoline engine with 274 horsepower and 260 lb-ft of torque. Engine is capable of running E85 or can be equipped with a Gaseous Engine Prep package for compressed natural gas (CNG) or liquid petroleum gas (LPG) operation.
- Available Ford 3.2L I-5 diesel engine with 185 horsepower and 350 lb-ft of torque

- Better Fuel Economy – capable of 16 miles per gallon, combined EPA estimated fuel rating* in 3.7L gasoline versions
 - A 60% improvement when compared to a traditional walk-in van
- Multiple Fuel Options
 - Gas
 - Diesel
 - CNG/Propane
- Recyclable aluminum body construction

Capacity/Efficiency

- 574-784 cubic feet of cargo capacity with up to 3,725 lb payload capacity
- 42-inch wide by 73-inch high sliding curbside door
- Door configuration and lower step heights yield faster entry/egress for improved productivity
- Easily accessible from the driver's seat, the cargo area allows operators over six feet tall to walk in and out of the van in an upright position
- Available in 156 inch and 178 inch wheelbase configurations
- Payload capacities of 3,725 lb (12 ft), 3,600 lb (14 ft) and 3,200 lb (16 ft)
- 27-inch wide by 82-inch high sliding bulkhead door
- Heavy duty shelving rated at 600 lb for 12 ft models.
- Optional jump seat

Utilimaster recently completed a \$10-million investment in plant operations to deliver its premier trucks with speed and excellence. "Our investment in plant operations focuses on four pillars: decrease order to delivery times, increase plant efficiency, and deliver customer orders on-time and with quality." said Daryl Adams, President and CEO of Spartan Motors. "Our results are impressive. In-plant assembly times are now three days in comparison to the usual 21 days required to build vehicles. Our clients tell us we have the best plant operations in the commercial van industry."

The VELOCITY aligns with Spartan's D.R.I.V.E. initiative, as it positions the company for diversified growth with its redefining technology and innovation. Additionally, it reaffirms the strength of the Utilimaster team and our commitment to supporting the commercial van and walk-in industry. The Company's latest innovation will be featured until Friday, March 6, in booth #1133.

D.R.I.V.E. is Spartan's operating strategy based on five tenets:

- **Diversified Growth**
- **Redefining Technology and Innovation**
- **Integrated Operational Excellence**
- **Vibrant Culture**
- **Excited Consumers/Brand Loyalists**

For more information on Utilimaster, visit www.utilimaster.com or call (574) 848-2111.

*Actual mileage will vary.

About Utilimaster

Utilimaster, a subsidiary of Spartan Motors, Inc (Nasdaq:SPAR), is a leading manufacturer of commercial truck bodies, walk-in vans and provides customized upfit solutions for a variety OEM vehicle platforms.

Utilimaster helps fleet owners reduce operating cost by analyzing fleet operators on their routes and then recommending best practices. Utilimaster serves the fleet owner looking to deploy a new corporate initiative into their existing fleet or implement new technology/equipment into current operations. The Utilimaster client development team has more than 200 years of industry experience and a broad list of best practices than can be tailored to individuals, small and large fleet operations.

Since 1973, Utilimaster engineers and designers have met, and exceeded, the expectations of vehicle operators and fleet managers. Contact a business development manager at 800-582-3454 to learn more about how an engagement with Utilimaster will help you achieve your business objectives. For more information, visit the Utilimaster website at 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, government services, defense, and delivery and service markets. The Company's brand names – Spartan™, Spartan Chassis™, Spartan ER™, Spartan ERV™ and Utilimaster® – are known for quality, performance, service and first-to-market innovation. The Company employs approximately 1,700 associates at facilities in Michigan, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Indiana and Florida. Spartan reported sales of \$507 million in 2014 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.

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