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Utilimaster(R) Announces Partnership With Smith Electric Vehicles to Produce and Market All-Electric Zero-Emission Newton(TM) Step Vans

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WAKARUSA, Ind., March 6, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Utilimaster Corporation, a subsidiary of Spartan Motors, Inc. (Nasdaq:SPAR), announced today that it has partnered with Smith Electric Vehicles Corp. (Smith) to produce and market the all-electric zero-emission Newton Step Van.

Utilimaster and Smith co-developed an integrated walk-in van design using Smith's Newton chassis platform, which includes its proprietary all-electric Smith Drive™, Smith Power™ and Smith Link™ systems to provide superior power train performance, battery management efficiency and remote system monitoring. The Newton Step Van is available in configurations of 14,000 to 26,000 pounds GVW and 650 - 1200 cubic feet, and provides a range of approximately 100 miles on a single charge.

"The innovation and product performance found in the Newton Step Van sets a new industry standard for alternative propulsion walk-in vans. This was achieved by two leaders in the industry – Smith and Utilimaster – collaborating to integrate a new delivery and service solution. The Smith Electric partnership offers our clients an affordable green solution with a reliable all-electric vehicle platform. Utilimaster's electric van body is built on a commercially proven electric drive platform technology that has been working reliably for years with a number of national fleets," says John Knudtson, vice president, product development for Utilimaster.

Smith Electric has successfully deployed hundreds of commercial electric vehicles into fleet operations around the world, including PepsiCo's Frito-Lay division, Staples, Coca-Cola, Sainsbury's and TNT. Smith's vehicle designs leverage more than 80 years of market knowledge from selling and servicing electric vehicles in the United Kingdom.

"Our partnership with Utilimaster combines their vehicle integration expertise with Smith's experience in all-electric vehicle deployment to create a driver experience that is familiar to diesel, but with all of the benefits of electric – silent operation, no diesel fumes, and no diesel fuel expense," says Angela Strand, chief marketing officer and vice president, business development for Smith Electric.

About Utilimaster

Utilimaster, www.utilimaster.com, a subsidiary of Spartan Motors, Inc. (Nasdaq:SPAR), is the 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 one-way truck rental, bakery/snack delivery, utility, package delivery, linen/uniform rental, and a variety of service vocations. The company serves a diverse commercial customer base as well as markets nationwide field service solutions.

About Smith Electric Vehicles

Smith Electric Vehicles Corp. (www.smithelectric.com) develops, produces and sells zero-emission commercial electric vehicles that are designed to be an alternative to traditional diesel trucks, providing higher efficiency and lower total cost of ownership. Smith's vehicle designs leverage more than 80 years of market knowledge from selling and servicing electric vehicles in the United Kingdom. Smith Electric Vehicles produces the Newton™ and the Edison™. The company operates manufacturing facilities in Kansas City, Mo., and outside of Newcastle, U.K.

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