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Hybrid Technology Could Have School Bus Applications

ATLANTA (Oct. 31, 2008) — Navistar, Eaton Corporation and UPS will partner on a new technology for delivery trucks that may have applications for school buses.

The companies recently announced the sale of seven hydraulic hybrid UPS trucks. Rather than store energy from braking in batteries or capacitors, as hybrid electric vehicles do, hydraulic hybrids store the energy by compressing hydraulic fluid under pressure in a chamber. Like hybrid electric vehicles, the hydraulic hybrids release this energy when accelerating at low speeds to reduce fuel consumption.

According to UPS and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency testing, the vehicles achieve a 45 to 50 percent improvement in fuel economy compared to conventional diesel trucks. UPS estimates the trucks would also reduce carbon-dioxide emissions by 30 percent.

Roy Wiley, a spokesman for Navistar's school bus division, IC Bus, said because school buses and delivery vehicles have similar drive cycles, the technology has potential applications for school buses, though he could not say whether the company had any projects in development. The EPA has also said the technology has potential applications for shuttle buses, transit buses and refuse pick-up vehicles.

According to an article in STN last year, Eaton and the U.S. Army Hydraulic Hybrid, Advanced Materials and Multi-fuel Engine Research program developed a similar hydraulic hybrid prototype based on a Ford E-450 Cutaway shuttle bus using Eaton Corporation's Hybrid Launch Assist technology.

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