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NEW PLUG-IN OPTIONS FOR SAINT PAUL DRIVERS

Saint Paul, Minnesota (Oct. 4, 2011) – The City of Saint Paul, the Neighborhood Energy Connection and Xcel Energy today announced more options for sustainable transportation. Two new plug-in hybrid electric vehicles are now available for use by members of HOURCAR, a car-sharing organization in Saint Paul and Minneapolis. In addition, the city is installing 20 public stations for charging plug-in electric vehicles.

“With the help of our many partners, Saint Paul continues to lead the charge in energy conservation and sustainability. Our new plug-in vehicle options will make it even more convenient for people to get where they need to be in a way that minimizes their carbon footprint,” Mayor Chris Coleman said.

“Thanks to Xcel Energy’s contribution, residents and employees in downtown Saint Paul have two great new options for personal transportation. They can walk, bike or use transit to commute to work, but when they need a private car, they can reserve and drive one of these remarkably ‘green’ HOURCAR plug-in hybrids,” said Chris Duffrin, executive director of HOURCAR’s parent organization, the Neighborhood Energy Connection.

“We’re excited to partner with HOURCAR to pilot this innovative transportation technology,” said Judy Pofert, president and CEO, NSP-Minnesota, an Xcel Energy Company. “By being a part of this project, we will obtain important information that will allow us to better serve the emerging electric vehicle market.”

Xcel Energy provided \$30,000 to HOURCAR for two hybrid cars, which were converted to plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV). The vehicles are now available for use by its members in the Lawson and Lowertown ramps in Saint Paul, both of which are located in the Energy Innovation Corridor. The Energy Innovation Corridor is an area along the planned Central Corridor Light Rail Transit line, and is a showcase of energy efficiency, renewable energy, transportation and smart technology. With 13 HOURCARs stationed at nine hubs in the city, Saint Paul residents and visitors are among the earliest adopters of advanced transportation technologies.

Plug-in HOURCARs and other plug-in electric vehicles can be charged at one of 20 public Coulomb ChargePoint and Eaton Pow-R electric vehicle charging stations being installed this fall and next spring. The stations provide Level One or Level Two charging and range from hourly use to monthly contract parking. Charging station locations, rates and details can be found at www.stpaul.gov/EVchargingstations. The electric vehicle charging stations were funded by a federal stimulus grant to the City of Saint Paul from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program.

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The City of Saint Paul, Neighborhood Energy Connection's HOURCAR and Xcel Energy are partners of the **Energy Innovation Corridor** and **Drive Electric Minnesota**. Drive Electric Minnesota is a partnership of local and state government, utility providers, private business and nonprofit entities working in collaboration to bring electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in charging infrastructure to Minnesota. More information is available at www.energyinnovationcorridor.com and www.driveelectricmn.org.

HOURCAR is a program of the nonprofit Neighborhood Energy Connection. HOURCAR was founded in 2005 to provide an alternative to car ownership in the Twin Cities, and now serves more than 1,500 members. Members reserve and drive any of 32 fuel-efficient vehicles located in convenient neighborhood hubs across Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Rate plans include the costs of insurance, gasoline, maintenance and parking. In customer surveys, HOURCAR members report a high level of satisfaction and savings. Learn more at HOURCAR.org.

Xcel Energy (NYSE:XEL) is a major U.S. electricity and natural gas company that provides a comprehensive portfolio of energy-related products and services to 3.4 million electricity customers and 1.9 million natural gas customers through its regulated operating companies in eight Western and Midwestern states. Company headquarters are in Minneapolis. More information is available at xcelenergy.com.

Note to Editors: Rides in the HOURCAR available upon request.