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Launch of the All-New Reach(TM) Commercial Van Begins With Dedication of Utilimaster Plant

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WAKARUSA, Ind., Oct 25, 2011 (GlobeNewswire via COMTEX) --

Utilimaster Corporation, a subsidiary of Spartan Motors, Inc. (Nasdaq:SPAR), and a market leading manufacturer of walk-in vans and commercial truck bodies for the Delivery and Service market; and Isuzu Commercial Truck of America, Inc., the distributor of America's best-selling low-cab-forward trucks, today announced they will celebrate the launch of the Reach(TM) commercial van with a plant dedication at Utilimaster's headquarters located in Wakarusa, Indiana.

Executive leadership from Utilimaster and Spartan Motors, Inc., as well as from Isuzu Commercial Truck of America and Isuzu Manufacturing Services of America, will commemorate the plant dedication and product launch with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and gift exchange. They will be joined by customers, government officials, media and special guests for the occasion.

"The Reach represents a great opportunity to impact our customers' businesses, significantly reduce both fuel consumption across their fleets as well as their carbon footprint," said John Forbes, President of Utilimaster Corporation. "Today is the culmination of a focused program that benefited from the global resources and powertrain capabilities of Isuzu, and the market-specific knowledge and product development capabilities of Utilimaster."

Introduced in March 2011, the Reach -- with a body designed by Utilimaster atop a rugged Isuzu NPR ECO-MAX chassis powered by Isuzu's legendary 3.0-liter diesel engine -- offers the functionality of a custom-built work truck along with the styling and ergonomics of a cargo van, while achieving 35 percent better fuel economy than a traditional commercial van. The Reach offers best-in-class mileage and meets the latest EPA emissions standards, yet still provides true commercial truck capabilities and delivers a dramatically lower cost of ownership than traditional walk-in vans.

Commenting on this occasion, John Szykiel, President and CEO of Spartan Motors, said: "The continued diligent work of everyone involved on this product has positioned us for further growth in the delivery and service market. Today we celebrate the success of this team and their ability to produce a sustainable product that meets the duty-cycle demands of our customers, improved safety performance and driver ergonomics, as well as an exceptionally low cost of ownership."

Powering the Reach is Isuzu's state-of-the-art, bio-diesel fuel compatible 4JJ1-TC 3.0-liter turbocharged engine, mated to an Aisin medium-duty six-speed automatic transmission. Both the engine and transmission have class-leading B10 durability ratings of 310,000 miles, meaning that 90 percent of units will reach that mileage before requiring an overhaul.

Utilimaster guided the development of the Reach's aerodynamic shape, along with its use of composite materials, which together improve fuel efficiency and reduce interior noise. The lightweight composite materials provide a 700-pound weight savings compared to traditional aluminum and steel materials. The Reach van also employs impact-resistant composite panels that are designed to reduce overall maintenance costs. In the event of a collision, the vehicle's lower body cladding can be easily and quickly replaced, reducing costly downtime.

The Reach is offered in a 151 inch wheelbase -- and two body lengths -- 12 and 14 feet. With an interior up to 27 inches higher than a conventional Domestic van, and ten inches wider than imported vans, the cargo area of the Reach offers 540 or 630 cubic feet of storage, depending on the body length selected.

Unlike typical cargo vans, the Reach design allows the driver to quickly enter the cargo area without leaving the vehicle. An array of modular vocational packages affords 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. In addition, the Reach is the only van to offer either rear swing doors or an integrated, composite roll-up door.

Images of the plant dedication, product launch ceremony, and detailed product information on the Reach will be available at www.utilimaster.com.

Quick Facts

Sustainability

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

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

Cost of Ownership

- Isuzu's world-proven 4JJ1-TC clean diesel technology utilizes an intercooled turbocharger and delivers over a 35 percent improvement* in fuel-efficiency
- Fleets can realize significant fuel savings in excess of \$2,500 per vehicle per year, depending on conditions, duty-cycle and other variables
- Corrosion-resistant, composite construction saves 700 lbs. per vehicle

Capacity/Efficiency

- Improved door configuration and lower step heights yields faster entry/egress for improved productivity
- Cargo area offers additional aisle width which is 50 percent 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
- 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

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 six times quieter than competitive vehicles in this class**

++ 90% of 4JJ1-TC engines will reach that mileage before requiring an overhaul
* Compare to class 3 - 5 commercial walk-in vans: testing conducted by an independent
** Class 3 - 5 commercial walk-in vans

About Utilimaster

Utilimaster, 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.

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(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 1,900 at facilities in Michigan, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Indiana, Florida, 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 www.spartanmotors.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.

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