

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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## SECO Testing Hybrid Technology

**Sumterville, FL** – Sumter Electric Cooperative (SECO) is testing a new plug and go vehicle to ascertain if hybrid vehicles will be practical for SECO's fleet.

"At SECO the environment is important to us," said SECO CEO Jim Duncan. "In fact, the Co-op has won a number of awards and notoriety for its environmental initiatives. So, it is only natural that we look at how hybrid vehicles might have a significant presence in our fleet."

SECO's new hybrid is a Toyota Prius with a twist. The standard Prius is not a plug-in vehicle, but SECO's car has been retrofitted with a plug-in capability. And it employs the latest in lithium-ion battery technology.

"I believe that in the next five years we'll see additional strides made in alternative energy type vehicles from many different manufacturers and we'll be watching those developments closely here at SECO. We have a service territory of 2,000 square miles and 11,000 miles of power lines and other infrastructure. So, if we can gain on fuel mileage with some of our vehicles while we are serving our members, it will benefit everyone," Duncan said.

The new lithium-ion battery technology allows the SECO hybrid prototype to get 100 miles per gallon or better. A123 Systems of Massachusetts has developed this higher energy battery cell for after-market installation in automotive products. Nanophosphate™ chemistry used in the cells provides higher energy density while retaining the high power capability necessary for sustained vehicle operation. It will be a year or two before these new battery cells are available in mass quantities for consumer purchases.

"We are excited about being able to test a vehicle that incorporates such promising new technology. It is also an opportunity to raise public awareness about hybrid vehicles and how they can help us reduce our dependence upon foreign oil and, in general, help the environment," concluded Duncan.

The graphic design for SECO's 100+ mpg hybrid is eye-popping and has already prompted many comments and questions from those who have seen the car. The 100+ mpg feature is a major graphic component. Frogs also appear atop the SECO logo because frogs are one of the prime biological indicators of a healthy environment. And, the car's nickname, **SECO Trekker**, appears on the doors and hood. Trekking is often associated with ecotourism.

*(photo attached)*

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