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IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS National Survey Finds the Quest for Fuel Efficiency Is Changing Americans' Car Consciousness

Detroit, Mich. – With rising gas prices, today's car buyers admit fuel efficiency and diversity is not just a necessity, it's also fashion forward. If Americans had to choose between driving a car that was beautiful on the outside vs. one that was "greener" on the inside, nearly eight in 10 Americans (79 percent) who plan to buy or lease a car within the next two years would choose the greener car. These and more compelling statistics are a result of a national survey recently conducted by Challenge X – a national collegiate engineering competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and General Motors (GM).

The survey also revealed more than one in three Americans (36 percent) who are on the fence about buying a hybrid vehicle say the tipping point to seriously consider the purchase would be if gas prices rose to \$4 a gallon. Nearly three in four car buyers (73 percent) say the rising cost of traditional fuel would influence their decision to buy a hybrid vehicle as their next purchase.

Here's additional Challenge X survey insight on how fuel efficiency is changing Americans' car consciousness:

- **Fuel-efficient -- The new chick magnet?** Close to nine in 10 women (88 percent) say they'd rather chat up someone with the latest fuel-efficient car versus the latest sports car.
- **How to win friends and influence people.** Eighty percent of American car buyers would find someone with the latest model fuel-efficient car more interesting to talk to at a party than someone with the latest model sports car.
- **Not green? That's a fashion don't.** More than four out of 10 (45 percent) 18-43 year-olds say it's a fashion faux-pas nowadays to have a car that is not green or environmentally friendly.
- **Project roadway.** More than seven in 10 (73 percent) car buyers say if there were a reality TV show like "Project Runway" that was not about fashion design, but instead about designing the best-looking fuel-efficient and emissions-free car, they'd definitely watch.

Aside from the fact that it's hip to be green, 86 percent of American car buyers say that when it comes to innovation in fuel efficient cars, our country has some catching up to do. An overwhelming 97 percent also agree that a nation's commitment to innovate should include encouraging the spirit of innovation in young people because they bring a fresh perspective.

About Challenge X

Challenge X: Crossover to Sustainable Mobility highlights innovative ways young people are working to improve our world by developing alternative energy solutions through a real-world engineering competition.

Student teams from 17 universities throughout North America are tasked with re-engineering a Chevrolet Equinox with alternative propulsion systems to reduce petroleum use and greenhouse gas emissions, while retaining the vehicle’s performance and consumer appeal. The vehicles range from hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid or fuel cells and run on ethanol, biodiesel, hydrogen or electricity.

“The Challenge X competition is a great way for General Motors to be directly involved with student engineers, working on sustainable mobility, as they gain real-world experience on arguably the hottest topic facing the auto industry today,” said Micky Bly, GM director of Hybrid Vehicle Integration and Controls.

“This competition focuses on advanced technology that promotes energy security and economic growth,” said Ed Wall, manager of the Vehicle Technologies Program, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy. “Challenge X demonstrates how government, industry and academia are working together to develop creative approaches and solutions to decrease energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in America’s vehicles.”

The competition began in 2004 and concludes in mid-May 2008 with a road rally from New York City to Washington, D.C. Additional information about the Challenge X program is available at <http://www.challengex.org> and photography is available at <http://www.digitalrailroad.net/challengex>

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Methodological Notes:

The Challenge X Survey was conducted from February 20-28, 2008 by Kelton Research. In total, 500 interviews were fielded online. During fieldwork, quotes were set to ensure a reliable and accurate read that was representative of U.S. consumers, ages 18 or older, who plan to purchase or lease a car in the next two years.

The results of any opinion survey are subject to variation – in the form of a margin of error. The overall margin of error for this study is +/-4.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.