



For Immediate Release: March 2, 2009

Media Contact:
ROBERT WOOD
512-327-3628
cityadmin@westlakehills.org

Texas' First Hybrid Police Patrol Car to Protect West Lake Hills

(WEST LAKE HILLS, Texas)—The West Lake Hills Police Department will be the first in Texas to add a hybrid vehicle to its patrol fleet.

Although other law enforcement agencies in Texas use hybrid vehicles for administrative purposes, the City's new Toyota Highlander SUV will be the first police vehicle to be used on daily traffic patrols. The pilot program was initiated by the West Lake Hills City Council to reflect the city's dedication to environmental issues.

"Our community is committed to protecting the environment," said Mayor Dave Claunch. "This hybrid patrol vehicle will use less gas and emit far less carbon dioxide than a conventional police car. We are proud to lead by example, and we hope this encourages people to invest in eco-friendly technologies themselves."

The new patrol vehicle is the same model available at area auto dealerships. It carries the same electronic equipment as the City's other police patrol vehicles with the addition of a supplemental battery to handle the electrical load from the vehicle's radio, lighting and video recording equipment.

"We expect the new patrol car to perform just as well as our other patrol cars," said Claunch. "When we test drove the hybrid Highlander, any performance concerns were immediately allayed. The vehicle engages both the electric motor and the gasoline engine when you punch the gas pedal and it takes off like a rocket. Speeders beware!"

"Most importantly, we want to protect our officers," said Police Chief Cliff Spratlan. "The vehicle has to be sturdy, reliable and safe."

Police vehicles often have poor gas mileage statistics since the engines are left running during traffic stops in order to supply electricity to the onboard equipment. The new hybrid is rated at 26 miles per gallon in city driving, which should save the city thousands of dollars each year in fuel cost.

"West Lake Hills has taken an important first step towards cleaner air for our communities, and we hope other cities will realize the importance of this issue and

follow their lead,” said Deanna Altenhoff, Executive Director of the CLEAN AIR Force of Central Texas.

After evaluating the new hybrid’s durability, the police department will consider buying more hybrids in the coming years as older patrol vehicles are replaced. Police vehicles are usually used five years before being rotated out of patrol duty.

Media Photography Opportunity:

WHAT: Special ceremony to unveil the new patrol vehicle with ten-minute ride-alongs after the ceremony

WHO: The City of West Lake Hills and the West Lake Hills Police Department

WHEN: Wednesday, March 11, 2009
11 a.m.

WHERE: West Lake Hills City Hall
911 Westlake Drive

About the City of West Lake Hills

The City of West Lake Hills is located in Travis County just south and west of Lake Austin and Lady Bird Lake. Incorporated in 1953 and covering an area of approximately four square miles, the current population is just more than 3,000.

West Lake Hills is unique in many ways. The citizens, along with their elected and appointed officials, are dedicated to preserving the rural environment and maintaining the natural beauty of the area.

###