

Business

Attempt for world record longest hybrid-vehicle parade to happen July 24



Paul Webb, pictured Thursday with his Toyota Prius, was the first person to sign up for a parade event July 24, when organizers hope to have 500 hybrid owners drive along the Beltline from Smart Motors to the Alliant Energy Center to try to break a world record for longest hybrid parade. The right lane will be shut down from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. to all but parade participants, who will have a police escort.

Hybrid enthusiasts sponsored by Smart Motors in Madison will try to break an official world record next month for longest hybrid-vehicle parade.

The event, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Sunday, July 24, will feature up to 500 gas-electric hybrids driving a 6.2-mile route between the Toyota dealership at 5901 Odana Road and the Alliant Energy Center, which is hosting HybridFest that weekend.

Organizers said both the timing and location, in green-friendly Madison, seemed perfect for taking a crack at the record, which according to the Guinness Book now stands at a mere 140 hybrids strung together in Belgium in 2010.

Hybrid owners invited from across the Midwest, including 200 or more drivers just in the Madison area, should have no trouble besting that, Smart Motors' Paul Cooley said Thursday.

"You can walk from here to the Capitol stepping on nothing but Priuses," Cooley said. "If we can't beat the record, who can?"

Smart Motors has long been the state's No. 1 hybrid dealer, selling the Prius, granddaddy of the hybrid industry and a brand now 10 years old.

But the parade is open to hybrids built by any manufacturer, though nothing all-electric, like the Nissan Leaf, Cooley said. Participants should register for the free event at thehop.eventbrite.com. There were 13 people signed up Thursday, and Paul Webb, a Prius owner from Cross Plains, was the very first.

"I've never done anything like this and I thought it would be fun," said Webb, 32, adding he liked the idea of highlighting hybrid fuel efficiency during this time of \$4 a gallon gasoline. Webb said he averaged 48.6

miles per gallon last year, including winter driving, when Prius mileage drops from about 50 mpg to the low 40s.

"Depending on how you drive," Webb noted.

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WHAT'S A HYBRID?

A hybrid is a vehicle that uses two sources of power, usually electricity from a high-voltage battery pack and a gasoline engine.

Technology varies by manufacturer. With a Toyota, the car runs on either the electric motor or gasoline engine as needed, typically with the gas engine clicking on automatically for higher speeds, steep hills and extended highway driving. In the Honda system, the motor assists the engine.

GET INVOLVED

To drive your hybrid in the parade, register online here: <http://thehop.eventbrite.com>

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