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**Campus green campaign adds a new dimension**

What do you get when you combine a couple of Volts with several Hornets? An intriguing collaboration between the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) and Sacramento State to help gauge electrical grid impacts, usage patterns and drivers’ experience with the Chevy Volt – General Motors’ plug-in hybrid electric vehicle.

Sac State took delivery on Wednesday, Oct. 31, of two Volts. One will be used by University Transportation and Parking Services (UTAPS); the second will be driven by other campus staff. Both vehicles were provided free to the campus.

The duration of the contract is being negotiated, but Bill Boyce, supervisor of SMUD’s Electric Transportation Research Group, believes it will extend to March 2014. During that time, project manager Deepak Aswani says, SMUD will collect wireless data on the time of day the cars are driven and vehicle charging patterns, and make periodic surveys of driver feedback.

The contract flows from a Department of Energy grant that has enabled General Motors to partner with SMUD, which in turn contracted with Sac State. This included installation of two charging stations, one in the lot adjacent to Sacramento Hall, the other in Parking Structure I near the baseball field. These stations can fully charge the vehicle in four hours, while a portable charger, located in the trunk, takes twice as long when plugged into a standard outlet.

“The Volt agreement is another example of how we can leverage our community partnerships to advance environmental sustainability,” University President Alexander Gonzalez says. “This will benefit Sacramento State by providing highly efficient vehicles, and the data collected will provide a valuable look at how electric cars function in a real-world setting.”

The Volt averages about 37 miles of pure electric driving. If necessary, the hybrid then smoothly transitions to a gas engine, which powers a generator to keep the electric motor going to power the car for another 300 miles on a full tank of gas.

The SMUD-Sac State pact dovetails with the campus’s longstanding commitment to sustainability. Plug-in hybrid vehicles such as the Volt can significantly reduce the...
negative air quality impact from daily driving, and their regular upkeep and power supply costs can cut personal driving expenses significantly.

“We’re excited to participate in this important program that will help the campus promote sustainability,” says Nancy Fox, senior director of UTAPS.

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