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Greening Sarasota County's fleet one bucket at a time

Sarasota County Fleet Services recently accepted delivery of two hybrid aerial bucket trucks that were purchased for use by Traffic Operations.

Each truck uses an electric motor to start it moving and propel it up to 20 mph. After 20 mph, the engine powers up to drive the truck. When the aerial bucket system is in use, a battery pack provides the energy to operate the hydraulics for the aerial bucket for up to 6 hours. When the battery power is low, the truck engine automatically starts. The engine recharges the battery pack in five minutes, then automatically shuts down. This technology will result in a 40 to 60 percent fuel savings in the aerial unit application. Fuel savings also will occur, depending upon the amount and type of driving the vehicles are used for.

Other advantages to using this hybrid technology include:

- noise reduction since the truck engine does not run full time when the aerial unit is working
- emission reductions of 65 percent in hydrocarbon, 58 percent in carbon monoxide and 41 percent in nitrogen oxide
- improved performance with a smaller engine
- almost seamless truck operation like any conventional truck.

"Acquiring these hybrid vehicles follows the county's philosophy of moving to a more sustainable way of doing business," said Greg Morris, manager of Fleet Services. "It's just a smarter way of doing business and saving taxpayers' money in the long run."

For more information about the hybrid vehicles, call the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask for Fleet Services.

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