

SCGOVALERT

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Media Alert: Hybrid bus preview will be held today at SCAT

A special preview of the new hybrid bus will be offered to media representatives from 1-2:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 4, at the headquarters of Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT), 5303 Pinkney Ave., Sarasota.

SCAT officials and a representative of Allison-General Motors, developer of the diesel-electric hybrid propulsion system, will be available for interviews.

Anyone planning to attend the preview is asked to use SCAT's southernmost entrance off Pinkney Avenue.

The hybrid bus will join SCAT's fleet Monday, Aug. 7, when it will pick up passengers along Route 17, which runs between the Venice Train Depot and the Downtown Transfer Station.

To celebrate the more fuel-efficient hybrid, SCAT will offer passengers free rides on the hybrid bus between now and the end of the year. With its bright green-blue-gold-white design, the bus can be easily spotted as it rotates daily among the different SCAT routes.

The new bus is in the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) body style. This modern style has a curved front and rear with distinctive headlights.

The hybrid is the first of 10 the county has ordered and will have in operation by early 2007, making SCAT the owner of the largest fleet of BRT hybrid buses in Florida and, possibly, with the largest fleet of all types of hybrid buses in the state. An additional 20 hybrid buses are planned for delivery in 2007.

The new hybrid buses are part of Sarasota County's commitment to reducing fossil fuel use through an initiative called the 2030 Challenge, which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on July 11.

NOTE TO EDITORS: A PDF of a fact sheet about the hybrid bus is attached. Video footage of the bus as it was completed at the manufacturer, Gillig Corp. of Hayward, Calif., will be available at the preview.

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