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Safe, comfortable, efficient - The new Mercedes-Benz E-Class sends a positive signal in Detroit for the 2009 automotive year

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Detroit (ots) - The new star in the luxury segment made its first appearance on the eve of the 2009 NAIAS - as part of the Mercedes-Benz New Year's Reception in Detroit, Daimler CEO Dr. Dieter Zetsche presented the latest version of the successful luxury sedan in front of over 650 trade journalists from around the world. With the new E-Class, Mercedes-Benz is setting the new benchmark, particularly in terms of safety and comfort, as well as environmental sustainability and economy. Under the heading "fascination and responsibility", the Stuttgart automobile manufacturer presented a further two new models - the SLR Stirling Moss crowns the successful SLR super sports car range with an uncompromising high performance model. And with the BlueZERO concept, Mercedes-Benz is leading the way in environmentally sustainable electric mobility. The intelligent, modular concept facilitates no less than three models with different powertrain configurations on the basis of one single vehicle architecture.

"The new E-Class is the safest, most comfortable and cleanest E-Class ever. It is yet further evidence that fascination and responsibility go hand-in-hand at Mercedes", commented Dr. Dieter Zetsche, Chairman of the Board of Management of Daimler AG and Head of Mercedes-Benz Cars at the exclusive preview presentation. "We are certain that the new E-Class will send a positive signal for the 2009 automotive year, and will be among the winners in the global market."

The new E-Class - comprehensive safety, exceptional comfort and up to 23 percent lower fuel consumption

The new E-Class extends even further Mercedes-Benz's leading position in the luxury class with a unique combination of driver assistance systems. These include ATTENTION ASSIST, Adaptive Main Beam Assist (Adaptive High Beam Assist in the U.S.) and automatic emergency braking, which is activated under immediate threat of a collision. Mercedes-Benz has improved the already exemplary long-distance comfort of the E-Class even further in the new sedan. Advances include intelligent bodyshell technology with up to 30 percent greater stiffness, further improved seats and a newly developed suspension system with shock absorbers that automatically adjust to the driving situation. The available AIRMATIC suspension now works together with a continuously variable electronic damping system.

The outstanding safety and comfort of the E-Class are matched by its environmental compatibility and economy. The E-Class comes to the U.S. market with V6 and V8 gasoline engines, as well as the groundbreaking 50-state 3.0 liter BlueTEC diesel (launching in CY 2010) - the world's cleanest diesel engine, compliant with ULEV and Bin 5 standards. The four- and six-cylinder gasoline engines are direct-injection units, and consume up to 23 percent less fuel than before. The combined NEDC consumption of the new four-cylinder diesel engines is just 5.3 liters per 100 kilometers, which corresponds to 139 grams of CO2 per kilometer. All the engines for the new E-Class meet the EU5 emission standard, and in the case of the E350 BlueTEC the emissions are already below the EU6 limits planned for 2014.

Concept BlueZERO - triple proof of the everyday usability of zero-emissions vehicles

With the production-ready BlueZERO concept, Mercedes-Benz is leading the way in Detroit in the field of environmentally sustainable electric mobility, without sacrificing interior and luggage space. The intelligent, modular concept facilitates three models with distinct powertrain configurations on the basis of only one single vehicle architecture - all of them able to fulfill customer requirements for sustainable mobility:

- the BlueZERO E-CELL with a battery electric drive and battery-powered range of up to 200 kilometers (125 miles),

- the Blue-ZERO F-CELL with fuel cell drive and an electric range of well over 400 kilometers (250 miles),

- the BlueZERO E-CELL PLUS with electric drive and an additional internal combustion engine as a range extender. This version has an overall range of up to 600 kilometers (375 miles) and an electric-only range of up to 100 kilometers (62 miles).

The three BlueZERO variants were realized on the basis of the unique sandwich floor architecture, which Mercedes-Benz introduced ten years ago for the A-Class and later also the B-Class, also with a view to the integration of alternative drivelines. The benefit of the redeveloped construction is that the major drive components are built into the vehicle floor, which lowers the center of gravity, saves space and provides them with the best possible protection. The five-seat BlueZERO concept vehicles also set the benchmark in terms of lightweight construction, interior design and exterior styling.

"The flexible BlueZERO concept facilitates electric mobility to suit every requirement and demonstrates that Mercedes-Benz is already in possession of all the key technologies for electric vehicles suitable for everyday use", comments Dr. Thomas Weber, Member of the Board of Management of Daimler AG, responsible for Group Research and Development for Mercedes-Benz Cars.

All three BlueZERO variants share major technical components; design and vehicle dimensions are identical. At only 4.22 meters (1,072 inches) long, they combine compact exterior dimensions with generously proportioned and variable interior and luggage space. Five full seats, around 450 kg (990 lbs) load capacity and over 500 liters (17.7 cu. ft.) of luggage space make it a vehicle with unrestricted everyday usability. Thanks to the sandwich-floor construction and higher seating position, they also offer excellent crash safety for passengers and technology, as well as outstanding all-around visibility.

Compared with electric vehicles based on conventional vehicle platforms and originally conceived only for internal combustion engines, the BlueZERO concept offers convincing benefits:

- Thanks to the integration of the energy storage device and/or energy generator within the spacious sandwich floor, the room available within the vehicle remains fully intact.

- The drive technology built into the sandwich floor ensures a low center of gravity, as well as safe and agile handling characteristics.

- The sandwich concept and the packaging of major drive components between the axles make for the highest crash safety levels.

SLR Stirling Moss - fascination and driving pleasure in its purest form

Neither roof nor windshield separate the driver and passenger of the SLR Stirling Moss from the elements - they enjoy pure high-speed fascination with all the attributes of a speedster. Furthermore, the new SLR Stirling Moss distinguishes itself with the very latest technology and breathtaking design that reinterprets the myth of the legendary 300 SLR. Its V8 supercharged engine with 478 kW/650 hp catapults the SLR Stirling Moss in less than 3.5 seconds from a standstill to 100 km/h (62 mph), reaching a top speed of 350 km/h (220 mph).

"No other car is this open and this fast at the same time," says Dr. Klaus Maier, responsible for Sales and Marketing at Mercedes-Benz Cars. This extreme concept makes it the legitimate namesake for the legendary British racing driver and Mille Miglia record holder Stirling Moss, who drove Mercedes-Benz SLR race cars from victory to victory in 1955. The exclusive SLR Stirling Moss represents the conclusion of the current SLR range and is limited to 75 units. It is priced at 750,000 Euro. Production of the SLR Stirling Moss begins June 2009, to coincide with the scheduled wind-down of the SLR Roadster.

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