



PRESS RELEASE

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Ford Motor Company's Social Sustainability Leader keynotes event at UR's Jepson Center

STIR working to make Richmond a pilot city for electric transportation initiatives

RICHMOND – Richmond is a city of many firsts, but among the most notable is that the city had the first large scale and successful use of electricity to run an entire system of streetcars. Fast forward more than a century later and Richmond is seeking to once again be a national leader by teaming with Ford Motor Company to create a region that embraces electric vehicles (EVs).

David Berdish, Ford's manager of social sustainability, will speak at 7 p.m. April 12 at the University of Richmond's Jepson Alumni Center at a free event sponsored by Leadership Metro Richmond (LMR), the University of Richmond Environmental Studies Program and Sustainable Transportation Initiative of Richmond (STIR). Berdish will talk about major car manufacturers that will launch EVs across the country in 2011-12 and what it will mean to America. Ford is selecting 10 pilot cities (Richmond is a contender) for its Urban Mobility Network System that will help cities move toward a sustainable transportation system. Selected pilot cities will be eligible for a host of grants and funding for innovative transportation initiatives including the \$1.5 billion in USDOT TIGER grant opportunities.

Moderator Dr. Gary Rhodes, president of J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, is a STIR board member as are panelists Mary Doswell, senior vice president of Alternative Energy Solutions, Dominion Resources; John Lewis, CEO, GRTC Transit System and John W. Martin, president and CEO, Southeastern Institute of Research, Inc. Other panelists include Rachel Flynn, director of development for the City of Richmond and Trip Pollard, senior attorney for the Southern Environment Law Center.

"This is a great opportunity for Richmond to step up to the plate and reclaim its heritage as a national leader in electric-powered cars and sustainable transportation," said Martin. "David will talk about the vision, and STIR will issue the challenge to the community. A lively panel discussion will follow."

STIR was formed last year by a group of Richmond business and community leaders to establish Richmond as a national leader in effectively integrating green vehicles, and clean and efficient transportation systems into our work and living communities. The group grew as a result of a 2009 Leadership Metro Richmond (LMR) class, which played an important role in establishing the TransitTalk.com Web site. Trying to build on that effort, an LMR team from the 2010 class adopted a project geared to tapping into community interest in regional transportation, as reflected in the nearly 1,800 people who signed up for more information on the subject through TransitTalk.com. The group asked Ford 's David Berdish to come to Richmond to speak on the future of transportation, and how Richmond could be one of the top 10 pilot cities for Ford's Urban Mobility Network System.

"Ford is not yet convinced that we are ready for the future of transportation," said Mary Kay Huss, LMR Class of 2010 member. "We need to convince them that we are! We want people to come join these community leaders to talk about the potential for sustainable transportation in Richmond."

The April 12 event is free and open to the public, but registration is requested. Register online at <http://bit.ly/aFPcXq> For more information, go to www.projectstir.com

