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**Auto Shop Builds Electric Vehicle and Becomes First Dealer Alternative for the Maintenance & Repair of Hybrid Cars**

(Boulder, CO) – Slipstream Autocare has become Boulder’s first independent auto shop for the maintenance and repair of hybrid electric cars. As part of their initiative to support the use of alternative fuels and promote their hybrid repair services, Slipstream will be utilizing a pair of hybrid shuttle vehicles for customers – an automobile that they themselves converted from gasoline to full electric power, plus a Honda Insight hybrid electric car.

Since the company’s founding 24 years ago, Slipstream has been a proponent of resource conservation – regularly advising customers on environmentally friendly practices and opportunities to conserve fuel. Slipstream founder Bill Pichardo says, “Passion about the environment rubbed off on me from my mom, who helped establish the first recycling center in New Jersey in 1968. Even before hybrids came on the market, we were concerned with making sure both our corporate fleet and consumer clients were getting the best cost savings they could while being conservation-minded. It makes sense on so many levels.”

Nationally, sales of hybrids were less than 6,000, in 2000, but are expected to exceed 185,000 in 2005, and to reach 440,000 vehicles in 2008, according to J.D. Power and Associates. In 2000, there was only one model available—the Honda Insight—but now there are 8 models available and from 4 manufacturers. According to ABI Research, by 2006, hybrid vehicles will account for 10 percent of the 2 million midsize vehicles sold annually in the United States. So when the hybrid gasoline-electric automobiles began rolling off the assembly lines in larger numbers last year, Slipstream staff set out to become thoroughly skilled at repairing them.

In order to become “fluent” in hybrid technology, Slipstream undertook a year-long project to convert a gasoline-powered car to an electric one. Slipstream mechanics converted a 1990 VW Jetta from gasoline to full electric power, and performed the entire conversion in house. They are now in the final stages of converting that car to pure electric operation.

This electric and another hybrid car will replace Slipstream’s conventional shuttle that transports customers to and from Slipstream’s auto repair shop located just east of Foothills Parkway in Boulder. These short, in-town trips are ideally suited to an electric car, and provide Slipstream an opportunity to showcase the technology to their customers.

Pichardo said, “Building the electric car has given us valuable insight into the high voltage drive systems found on the current generation of hybrid vehicles. I have been heavily involved in hybrid development and consultation since 1996. We are proud to be the first independent auto shop in Boulder to offer repair services on these cars. Our new hybrid and electric shuttle vehicles will be a constant display of our hybrid expertise as well as our support of the technology.”

**Slipstream Autocare, Inc.** was founded in Boulder in 1981. Slipstream has been a consultant to Swarthmore College's Department of Engineering and their hybrid electrical vehicle program since 1996. They are leaders in the state for Pre-Purchase Inspections. Slipstream was awarded a perfect score by Air Care Colorado, and is under application review with the City of Boulder Office of Environmental Affairs Partner to become a member in the PACE (Partners for a Clean Environment) Program, which recognizes environmental achievement. For more information, please call Terri Lee for a media kit at 303-926-5148. Photos are available and photo opportunities are welcomed.

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