

DAIMLER

Contacts:

Han Tjan

212 909 90 63

Eva Wiese

+49 711 17 92311

Press Information

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car2go goes USA – Daimler introduces innovative mobility concept in Austin, Texas

- **U.S. pilot phase is slated for start in fall 2009 with fleet of 200 smart fortwo vehicles as internal pilot for specific users**
- **International expansion parallel to second pilot phase in Ulm, Germany with public access starting March 26**

Ulm, Germany / Austin, TX – Daimler will bring its innovative car2go mobility concept to the U.S. by fall of this year. The first international pilot will start in the Texas capital Austin with an initial fleet of about 200 fuel-efficient smart fortwo cars. car2go provides a simple, flexible, and cost-effective solution for city driving. The U.S. introduction coincides with the expansion of the pilot in Ulm, Germany, where the company opens the service to the public on March 26 after the internal test which started last October.

The car2go concept is based on a fleet of smart fortwo vehicles which are available for rent to registered members at any time, 24/7, making city driving as easy as using a mobile phone. “The results of the first, internal

pilot phase in Ulm demonstrate that, with car2go, we have found an additional answer to current and future mobility needs in urban areas – our project in Austin is the next logical step,” comments Thomas Weber, Member of the Board of Management of Daimler AG responsible for Group Research and for Development of Mercedes-Benz Cars.

Contrary to traditional car-sharing programs, car2go offers the freedom to get in a car and drive at any time of day without reserving a car in advance. The vehicle can then be used for as long as required and returned to any available parking location within the defined area of operation – a mobility solution offering maximum flexibility.

“We are delighted to be chosen as the first international partner for car2go,” says Austin Mayor Will Wynn. “Our city is well-known for its commitment to environmental issues and car2go is a perfect fit because it enables us to offer the citizens of Austin an intelligent mobility concept with an extremely positive environmental angle. The project has my full support.”

The goal of the Austin pilot project is to gather practical experience toward the international implementation of car2go. Initial challenges include its transferability to other cities, languages and mobility trends, as well as the adaptation of its business processes to the legal frameworks that exist in different countries. “We made a very conscious decision to go to a North American city,” adds Jérôme Guillen, Director of Daimler’s Business Innovation Department, where car2go was developed. “The car-sharing market in the U.S. is enjoying the highest growth rate in the world, which is why we feel that this is also a very good opportunity for car2go.”

“Reducing congestion, lowering emissions and providing innovative transit solutions are vital to Austin’s commitment to becoming the best managed city in America,” said City Manager Marc Ott. “I am proud of Austin’s commitment to identifying and implementing progressive solutions to the challenges of urban mobility and environmental sustainability. This car-share program provides one more option to address some of our urban transportation challenges.”

The positive attitude of the City administration, size and structure of the city, which boasts a progressive economic environment and is also home to one of the largest universities in the U.S., were important factors that led to the selection of Austin as the first international car2go city. smart fortwo mhd with start-stop-function will take to the streets here in fall of 2009. In Austin car2go will start, like in Germany, as an internal pilot for specific users, e.g. employees for the city of Austin. But it will be extended to the public, if successful. The car2go project in Austin includes not only the vehicles, but also the associated personnel and technical infrastructure. Support from the City of Austin is integral to the success of this pilot program. This is an opportunity to establish a true public-private partnership to work together to ensure the city is a showcase for urban mobility solutions.

International expansion – from Ulm, Germany to Austin, TX

The pilot test in Ulm, Germany, began in October last year with employees of the local Daimler Research Center and their families. Meanwhile 1,000 users registered for the new mobility offering, half of them during the first month. Additionally, a large number of cities from all over the world

expressed interest in offering car2go to their citizens.

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This extraordinarily successful start encouraged the car2go team to take the next step. With today's start of the public test phase, car2go is now available to all 120,000 citizens and visitors of Ulm. To this end, the vehicle fleet is being increased from its initial 50 cars to 200. "From the very beginning, we have seen car2go as hugely advantageous and a great opportunity for Ulm as a City of Science. The City is benefiting enormously from the public interest in car2go. We anticipate a reduction in the burden on city center traffic and parking in particular," says Ulm's Mayor Ivo Gönner. "We are very pleased that the first car2go in the U.S. will be driving in Austin. We feel a connection to Austin, in that science and cosmopolitanism is held in high esteem in both cities."

As part of the strategy, car2go will not only expand internationally, but also focus more heavily on larger city areas. Austin is six times larger than Ulm in terms of both its population and its geographical size. "We conceived car2go for international implementation from the very beginning," explains Robert Henrich, the project leader, talking about program targets. "With the positive experience that we have gathered in Ulm so far, we are now focusing on the challenges and opportunities presented by larger cities."

The Austin pilot program was also planned in close cooperation with local authorities and will be jointly implemented.

car2go – simple and cost-effective city driving

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The innovative car2go mobility concept was designed to foster individual urban mobility while using environmentally-friendly vehicles. Members can access a car2go from any location within a defined city area at any time of day or night.

Following the one-time registration, the car2go customer will receive a membership card or find his driver's license equipped with an electronic identifier that that will unlock the vehicle. Customers will be able to use the car2go vehicle in a number of different ways. Available vehicles can be rented on the spur of a moment: to access the vehicle, the car2go member simply holds his membership card or driver's license to the reading device located in the windscreen, climbs into the car, enters his PIN code and drives off. Vehicles can also be located quickly and easily via the internet or through the car2go service hotline. The system also allows members to make reservations up to 24 hours in advance, with customers being notified via text message about the location of the reserved vehicle.

The car2go rental period can be as long as desired and the vehicle remains reserved for the customer during stop-offs. When the customer wishes to return his car2go, he simply leaves the vehicle in a parking spot within the defined car2go city area. Any space not subject to parking fees or restrictions may be used – such as those along the side of the road or within designated parking areas. Furthermore, specially marked car2go parking spaces will be available at special locations such as train stations.

A car2go service team on the ground will handle daily maintenance of the vehicles. Billing is handled with the same degree of simplicity and flexibility as for every aspect of car2go – with rates by the minute, by the hour, or by the day. Pricing is all-inclusive: taxes, insurance, miles and gas.

For smart USA media inquiries please contact:

Ken Kettenbeil

Director Communications smart USA

248.648.2582

For smart fortwo product questions please contact:

smart 1 (1.800.smart.usa)

Further information on Daimler can be found in the internet at:

www.media.daimler.com and www.car2go.com