

**THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**  
**Office of Public Affairs**

News Media Contact: (202) 586-4940  
For Immediate Release: Thursday, March 10, 2010

**Department of Energy Finalizes \$50 Million Loan for Vehicle Production Group**  
*New, Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle to Run on Compressed Natural Gas Expected to Result in 900 U.S. Jobs*

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced today that the Department of Energy finalized a nearly \$50 million loan to The Vehicle Production Group LLC. The loan will support the development of the six-passenger MV-1, a purpose-built wheelchair accessible vehicle that will run on compressed natural gas. The vehicle will be produced at the Mishawaka, Indiana AM General Plant.

“Advances in vehicle technology like this will help reduce our dependency on oil and ensure that our nation’s workforce is producing the best, most innovative vehicles in the world,” said Secretary Chu. “We hope projects like VPG will encourage the development of other compressed natural gas vehicles, resulting in reduced emissions, new jobs and increased independence for Americans who use wheelchairs.”

The compressed natural gas vehicle MV-1 will use no gasoline and will produce lower emissions than gasoline-fueled vehicles. Vehicle Production Group estimates that at full capacity, the project will produce over 22,000 vehicles per year. The company estimates the project will produce over 100 jobs in Indiana, in addition to approximately 800 more direct and indirect jobs across 17 states for the assembly, part suppliers, production and sale of the vehicle.

Vehicle Production Group, a new American car company based in Miami, Florida, says MV-1 is the only purpose-built vehicle that is designed from the ground up for wheelchair accessibility. The company also states that MV-1 is the only factory-built light-duty vehicle to date that meets or exceeds the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The vehicle features a deployable access ramp with a 1,200-pound weight capacity, a 36-inch entryway and an interior that accommodates up to six occupants with the optional jump seat, including one or two wheelchair passengers and the driver.

The Department of Energy’s Loan Programs Office oversees the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) Loan Program. The ATVM Loan Program supports the development of innovative, advanced technologies that create thousands of clean energy jobs while reducing the nation’s dependence on oil. The Department has provided over \$8 billion in loans to advanced technology vehicle manufacturers, including Ford Motor Company, Fisker Automotive, Nissan North America and Tesla Motors.

###