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FORD TRIUMPHS AS FLEET MANAGERS NAME THEIR TOP VEHICLES AND COMPANIES AT 2011 ACFO AWARDS

Ford, Britain's largest supplier of company cars and vans, has scored a sensational quartet of wins at the prestigious 2011 ACFO Awards.

The 'blue oval' won four of the seven award categories, which included the Ford Focus being voted the nation's number one company car by influential fleet decision-makers for the first time since 2004.

The Ford Transit Connect Van was voted the nation's favourite Small Van for the ninth time in succession, while its Transit stablemate returned to the winner's rostrum after a two-year absence to claim the Large Van of the Year title for the 15th time in the history of the awards.

Ford's dominance of the Awards, which was hosted by ACFO tonight (Wednesday, November 2) at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole Hotel, was completed with the manufacturer winning the Fleet Safety Initiative Award for its Focus Driver Assistance Pack.

This Pack is a £750 option on the Focus and includes seven potentially life-saving features: Traffic sign recognition, which uses a forward-facing camera behind the rear view mirror to scan the roadside for speed limit signs and flashes up helpful reminders on the dash so drivers always know the speed limit; lane keeping aid; lane departure warning; auto high beam; blind spot alert; driver alert if sensors detect erratic driving; and Active City Stop, which monitors the road ahead and brakes the car automatically if a collision is imminent.

Meanwhile, BMW retained the Environmental Initiative Award for its low emission EfficientDynamics technology, which is gradually being rolled out across the manufacturer's model range. It is a combination of systems involving a mixture of Auto Start/Stop, Brake Energy Regeneration, Active Aerodynamics, low rolling resistance tyres, Electric Power Steering, on-demand ancillary systems and optimum gearshift indicator features.

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The Volkswagen Golf is a four-time ACFO Car of the Year winner and this year the range's 1.6 TDI BlueMotion model, which offers combined cycle fuel economy of 74.3 mpg and has carbon dioxide emissions of 99 g/km, was named Green Vehicle of the Year.

Finally, while all suppliers strive to deliver customer satisfaction through a high quality fleet service, ALD Automotive, one of the UK's largest vehicle leasing and fleet management companies, won the accolade as Fleet Service Company of the Year with ACFO members declaring that the organisation offered the best overall combination of quality products, service and integrity and fully understood the requirements of fleet decision-makers.

The Awards are in their 28th year and they were presented at a gala dinner attended by more than 220 ACFO members and their guests.

The Awards, which are voted on line exclusively by the ACFO membership, are highly prized because unlike many other awards they reflect the day-to-day operational experience and expertise of fleet decision-makers.

ACFO chairman Julie Jenner said: "Fleet decision-makers are reliant on motor manufacturers to deliver vehicles that are cost effective to operate, safe, reliable and environmentally-friendly and supplier companies to provide a first class service.

"Operating successfully in partnership it means that through the availability of top quality vehicles and first rate suppliers, vehicle downtime can be kept to an absolute minimum and fleet managers can focus on the efficient and effective operation of their vehicles to support their businesses."

- Pictures from the Awards presentation will be available on the ACFO website - www.acfo.org - from Thursday, November 3.

Results:

Fleet Safety Initiative of the Year

Winner - ***Ford Focus Driver Assistance Pack***

Shortlist - DVLA Licence Checking, Mercedes-Benz for in car safety systems, ALD Automotive ProFleet2.

Fleet Service Company of the Year

Winner - ***ALD Automotive***

Shortlist - Marshall Leasing, Lex Autolease, LeasePlan

Environmental Initiative of the Year

Winner - ***BMW EfficientDynamics***

Shortlist - 'From A to B: The ACFO Guide to UK Journey Planning', Bosch Stop-Start systems, ALD Automotive ProFleet2

Small Van of the Year

Winner - ***Ford Transit Connect***

Shortlist - Volkswagen Caddy, Citroen Berlingo, Mercedes Vito, Peugeot Bipper

Large Van of the Year

Winner - ***Ford Transit***

Shortlist - Mercedes Sprinter, Vauxhall Movano, Vauxhall Vivaro, Fiat Ducato

Green Vehicle of the Year

Winner - ***Volkswagen Golf BlueMotion***

Shortlist - BMW 3 Series, Nissan Leaf, Volvo V50 DRIVE, Vauxhall EcoFlex range

Fleet Car of the Year

Winner - ***Ford Focus***

Shortlist - BMW 3 Series, Volkswagen Passat, Volkswagen Golf, Skoda Octavia.

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Notes for Editors

ACFO Ltd is a non-profit making organisation. It is the largest UK body representing the interests of businesses which operate cars and vans as part of their normal commercial activities.

Members are represented within ACFO by a named delegate, often but not exclusively, the fleet or transport manager of the member organisation. There is, however, a very wide range of job titles involved, reflecting the different styles of fleet operation. ACFO provides both a national representation platform, and regional networking opportunities, to support its key objective of improving the discipline and craft of fleet management, and its status.

Further information can be obtained from

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