HONDA TEAMS GUNNING FOR REPEATED SUCCESS IN ANNUAL MPG MARATHON

Friday 14 October, 2016

Two Honda teams are busily preparing to build on their previous successes at the annual MPG Marathon, a two-day driving challenge which tests the skill of the competing drivers and the real-world fuel economy of the participating cars to the absolute maximum.

Taking place on Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 October 2016, the MPG Marathon aims to highlight the benefits of fuel efficient, economical driving, while providing a shop window for some of the most innovative, eco-friendly and diverse vehicles on sale, and even some not yet on sale, in the UK.

Based at the Heythrop Park Resort in Oxfordshire, competitors will be tasked with planning their own routes to reach four different venues across the heart of the country, aiming to achieve the highest possible MPG figure, with prizes also awarded for those that achieve the most significant percentage improvement over the manufacturer's quoted MPG figure.

Behind the wheel of a Honda Civic Tourer 1.6 i-DTEC will be Swindon-based Honda R&D Engineer and MPG Marathon veteran, Fergal McGrath. Fergal will share the two-day drive with colleagues Kyle Stevens, Rick Rowles and Jeremy Sibson. The team are out to defend an enviable track record of success in the event, which in 2015 saw them take home 'Best MPG' and second place in 'Best percentage improvement' in Class Four; and third place in 'Best overall percentage improvement'. Scoring a highly impressive 90.46mpg, the team delivered an improvement of 24.94% against Honda's quoted combined fuel economy of the Civic Tourer.

Fergal and his colleagues in R&D also celebrated triple victories in the 2014 event, scooping the 'Best overall MPG' prize (97.92), as well as the 'Best MPG' and Best percentage improvement' awards in Class Three.

Making up the other half of Honda's assault on the 2016 MPG Marathon will be the BBC's transport correspondent for the South of England, Paul Clifton, alongside former police inspector and now Regional Service Delivery Manager (South) for IAM RoadSmart, the largest road safety charity in the UK, Shaun Cronin. Once again behind the wheel of a Honda CR-V 1.6 i-DTEC, in which they won 'Best overall percentage improvement' in last year's competition, Paul and Shaun are out to retain their title which saw them expertly bring the CR-V home after 380 miles with an MPG of 84.34, an incredible 31.37% improvement on Honda's quoted figure.

Both Honda teams are very optimistic about getting behind the wheel for the 2016 competition, looking to build on their previous successes by targeting the 'Most Fuel-Efficient Family Car', 'Four Wheel Drive' and 'Load Lugging Economy Champion' awards.

Fergal McGrath comments: "We're really looking forward to taking on the challenge of the MPG Marathon again, and hopeful that we can bring home a good result. This event is the perfect platform to demonstrate what incredible real-world fuel economy many modern cars can achieve when the driver adopts just some simple and effective techniques which anyone can do. Whatever the result, it's always good fun, and promises much friendly rivalry with several familiar faces battling it out to squeeze every mile they can out of their fuel tanks."

Shaun Cronin comments: "In both my role with IAM RoadSmart and previously in the police I've always been interested in eco-driving. Beyond the obvious environmental and cost benefits, a driver with an eye on fuel economy is also a safer driver. This is due to their enhanced observation, anticipation and planning skills, they are much more aware of what is going on around them and therefore better able to react effectively. On a personal note I have always really enjoyed the challenge of this excellent event, and once again look forward to teaming up with Paul to see if we can retain our title!"

Day one of the MPG Marathon will see the teams head out from their North Oxfordshire start line towards a lunch stop in Ludlow, Shropshire, before resuming the afternoon with a trip to Stroud in Gloucestershire, then making their way back to Heythrop. The following day will see the teams set out for the iconic Silverstone circuit for morning coffee, with lunch in Hatfield, Hertfordshire, before returning once again to Heythrop to park up and await the much-anticipated final results.

The 2016 MPG Marathon is sponsored by ALD Automotive, RAC Business and Crystal Ball. A provider of

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