FORD SYNC CONNECTS CAR WITH INTERNET: NEW WIFI RECEIVER, BUILT-IN WEB BROWSER, MOBILE HOTSPOT

• New MyFord Touch™ driver connect technology features WiFi receiver and Ford-developed built-in web browser for internet access while parked
• Next-generation SYNC® system also creates mobile WiFi hotspot for passenger use by leveraging customer’s USB mobile broadband modem plugged into system’s Media Hub
• WiFi capability will be standard on vehicles equipped with MyFord Touch with no additional hardware or subscriptions required beyond the user-supplied mobile broadband modem

LAS VEGAS, Jan. 7, 2010 – Ford Motor Company will connect the car to the internet with the introduction of its new MyFord Touch driver connect technology and the second generation of its popular SYNC® in-car connectivity system.

MyFord Touch-equipped vehicles will feature a WiFi signal receiver that will provide Internet access, when parked, through a Ford-developed web browser using the system’s 8-inch touch screen. Also, inserting an owner’s compatible USB mobile broadband modem into SYNC’s USB port will produce a secure wireless connection that will be broadcast throughout the vehicle, allowing passengers with WiFi-enabled mobile devices to access the Internet while on the go.

“While you’re driving to grandma’s house, your spouse can be finishing the holiday shopping and the kids can be chatting with friends and updating their Facebook profiles,” said Mark Fields, Ford president of The Americas. “And you’re not paying for yet
another mobile subscription or piece of hardware because Ford will let you use technology you already have.”

Studies by the Consumer Electronics Association show that as many as 77 million adults make up the so-called technology enthusiast drivers population, more than half of whom express the desire for a connected communications and information system in their vehicles. Even among the general population, more than one third of Americans would be interested in the ability to check email and access Web sites in their vehicles.

**Upgradeable and secure**

The two USB 2.0 ports included in the MyFord Touch Media Hub let owners leverage a variety of devices, including the mobile broadband modem. And through simple software updates, SYNC can be adapted to connect with the latest devices.

“Technology is evolving at such speeds, particularly on the wireless front, that obsolescence becomes a real problem,” said John Schneider, chief engineer for HMI, Driver Controls and Infotainment. “We’ve solved that problem by making SYNC work with just about any technology you plug into it. By leveraging a user’s existing hardware, which can be upgraded independent of SYNC, we’ve helped ensure ‘forward compatibility’ with whatever connectivity technology comes next.”

The SYNC WiFi capability is a simple solution for bringing internet into the vehicle, versus competitive systems on the market. Being factory-installed, the hardware is seamlessly integrated into the vehicle, whereas competitor’s systems are dealer-installed and require a bulky bolt-in receiver and transmitter that take up cabin space. Also, competitive systems cost approximately $500 for equipment and installation, not to mention the monthly subscription fee.

“Using SYNC with existing mobile devices helps Ford provide the most value, the most flexibility and the most convenience for owners,” said Fields. “Constant connectivity is becoming a routine part of our customers’ lives, and we’re making existing technology more accessible without adding costs: That’s the kind of value Ford drivers have learned to expect.”
Using the SYNC WiFi system, a signal will be broadcast throughout the vehicle. Default security is set to WiFi Protected Access 2 (WPA2), requiring users to enter a randomly chosen password to connect to the Internet. When SYNC sees a new WiFi device for the first time, the driver must specifically allow that device to connect, preventing unauthorized users from “piggybacking” on the SYNC-provided signal.

**Ford web browser**

MyFord Touch and MyLincoln Touch will also incorporate a custom, webkit-based Internet browser (late availability) designed to take advantage of the system’s built-in 8-inch LCD touch screen. Using the browser, drivers and passengers can navigate to their favorite sites whenever the vehicle is in “Park” and an Internet connection is available, either through a USB broadband modem connected to SYNC or when SYNC is able to find a WiFi “hotspot.”

“We looked at off-the-shelf browsers but nothing was quite right for the in-car application,” explains Sukhwinder Wadhwa, manager of SYNC technologies and platforms. “So we took the best ideas from each, leveraged open source software, and tailored ours to provide a rich, customized browser that is ideal for our customers and the new MyFord Touch interface.”

For easy navigation, the MyFord Touch browser features an available on-screen touch-sensitive keyboard as well as support for external USB keyboards attached to one of SYNC’s two USB 2.0 ports. Tabbed page navigation and 3D carousel bookmark browsing lets users quickly access pages they’ve visited and stored. Fingertip “drag” movements pan and scroll on displayed pages in a manner similar to that of popular touch-screen mobile devices, and embedded support for multimedia plug-ins like Flash support rich content sites.

“Providing a built-in, full-featured browser customized to the in-car experience rounds out our in-car WiFi experience,” said Schneider. “Customers can park the car and use the on-screen browser. They can log on with a laptop in the back seat. They can use the car as a mobile hotspot. We’re giving Ford owners a variety of connectivity options and letting them choose the solution that works best for their individual needs.”
About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company, a global automotive industry leader based in Dearborn, Mich., manufactures or distributes automobiles across six continents. With about 200,000 employees and about 90 plants worldwide, the company’s automotive brands include Ford, Lincoln, Mercury and Volvo. The company provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. For more information regarding Ford’s products, please visit www.ford.com.