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Kia Optima Hybrid Triumphs In World Record Economy Drive

Kia has driven into the Guinness Book of World Records for the lowest fuel consumption in a hybrid petrol vehicle, while driving through 48 adjoining states in the USA.

After a 14-day journey that started at the company's manufacturing plant in West Point, Georgia and finished in Greenville, South Carolina, the Kia Optima Hybrid achieved an incredible fuel consumption of 3.64L/100km (77.7mpg), beating the car's official EPA highway fuel consumption figure by 61.37%.

The car was completely standard and to comply with Guinness World Record guidelines, the Optima Hybrid had to carry two people (drivers Wayne Gerdes and Chris Berniues) and their luggage throughout the journey.

The pair drove an average of 902 kilometres per day and the Optima Hybrid used just over 5.5 tanks of petrol to complete the route, recording an average distance of 2268.8 kilometres between re-fills.

Their epic journey took in every adjoining state in the country, followed in a clockwise direction, through all kinds of terrain and weather, from temperatures exceeding 47.7°C in the deserts of Arizona down to sub zero in the Rocky Mountains. And their route didn't just traverse highways, but also included rush-hour traffic jams in Chicago, New York and Las Vegas.

Todd McDonald, General Manager of Kia Motors New Zealand says the fact that the record was set over such a wide range of driving conditions and roads underlines the outstanding achievement.

"It's quite a remarkable feat and demonstrates the real-world fuel economy of the Optima Hybrid," he says. "It's a great testament to the technology and innovation that we are continually seeing from Kia Motors."

The record set is officially titled 'Lowest fuel consumption driving through all 48 contiguous US states in

a gasoline hybrid car,' which is a new category created by Guinness World Records. In order to qualify for a new record, the Kia Optima Hybrid was required to achieve a minimum of 52.27 US mpg, which the fuel efficient Optima Hybrid exceeded by 23%.

The Kia Optima Hybrid is powered by a 2.4-litre petrol engine, similar to the one in the models sold in New Zealand, but with its compression ratio raised 20% to improve economy and a conventional 6-speed automatic transmission. Additionally, it has a 30kW Interior Permanent Magnet (IPM) synchronous electric motor, which draws its power from a special lithium polymer battery array, which is far more efficient and also weighs considerably less than batteries used in other hybrid vehicles.

The ride height of the Optima Hybrid is lowered 5% and low drag wheels and standard fitment low rolling resistance tyres help to reduce the drag coefficient to a remarkable 0.26.

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Photo caption: The Kia Optima Hybrid sets a world record for low fuel consumption.

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