

FVEAA NEWSLETTER FOR 2004

An Independent Not-For-Profit Corporation associated with the National Electric Auto Association

NEXT MEETING: Friday, January 20 at 7:30 PM in the Triton INDUSTRIAL CAREERS BUILDING, (East Campus), Room 108

DISCUSSION TOPICS: TBD

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Any person interested in electric cars is welcome to join the Fox Valley Electric Auto Association. The cost for a full year's dues is \$ 20 which will entitle members to receive our monthly Newsletter that contains useful information about electric car conversions, construction, news, policies, and events. Membership is not required to attend our meetings. Dues for NEW members joining in January will be \$ 18.

To obtain information about the FVEAA you may:
Visit the FVEAA Website at www.fveaa.org

Or contact FVEAA Vice President Steve Grushas
924 South 7th Avenue
LaGrange, IL 60525
(708) 771-5202
E-Mail Stephengrushas800@msn.com

PRESSEZ

Ordinarily January is the start of a New Year. This includes a roster of paid members in the January Newsletter. It will be sent with the February issue.

THERE ARE NO MINUTES OF THE CANCELLED DECEMBER MEETING

FROM OTHER EV NEWSLETTERS AND ARTICLES AFFECTING ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The October 27th issue of *AutoWeek* on Page 27 had a description of Al Cicconi's T-Zero at the *Bidenbaum* Challenge last fall. Six years ago the vehicle with Trojan lead-acid batteries had a 0-60 time of 4.9 seconds. It is now equipped with Lithium Ion batteries and the time is lowered to 4.1 seconds due to the reduced weight. Both batteries have a power rating of 165 kW (about 229 horsepower}. Two of the vehicles have been sold for \$ 220,000 each.

The January issue of *Car and Driver* on Page 26 has an opinion column written by regular contributor Brock Yates titled, " The buyers have spoken: forget electric cars". It is about GM's EV-1 developed that began back in 1990 in response to the California initiative that established a sales quota of electric car sales by 2000. Smoggy California was ecstatic.

In ten years GM invested \$ 1.5 billion and built about 1000 vehicles for test purposes. (That works out to \$150,000 per vehicle; much of it was setting up a manufacturing process that would be used for commercial production that never occurred). After leasing about half of the vehicles GM ended the test. "A handful of customers were wildly enthusiastic but the rest sat on their checkbooks" Bedard writes. He also notes that, "Folks didn't want cars that spend more time on the charger than they do on the road."

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) devised an exit strategy that now requires cars to be "Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV)" and manufacturers must instead build hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. It appears that Toyota was the winner with its development of a hybrid car that qualifies as a ZEV. They sold 16,000 *PRIUS* vehicles in the first 18 months, mostly through the Internet. They also had the RAV-4 electric version of their popular SUV that could be purchased for \$ 40,000, contrasted with the GM approach of only *leasing* the EV-1. Sales were feeble, 213 vehicles bought in six months. Toyota concluded the same thing that GM had; there was no way to develop a *profitable* electric vehicle.

Bedard concludes, "Battery electric vehicles are simply not going to happen for a very sensible reason that customer's don't want them".

REBUTTAL:

Letter sent to Car & Driver

December 17, 2003

BACKFIRES, Car and Driver
2002 Hogback Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

The California electric car test, the subject of Patrick Bedard's column, was flawed. It was a government mandate that considered only the car's environmental advantages. The end result of the test was the collapse of all plans for electric car commercial production. If you want an electric car today you will have to build it yourself.

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What was missing from the test was an imaginative, effective, marketing program that could change the way in which the public now views a car as an all-purpose vehicle. What the California test should have included was an advertising program, similar to the one forty years ago when VW changed the public attitude toward small cars when they introduced the *Bug*.

Our FVEAA members have, as a hobby; each spent about \$8000 to convert a conventional car to an electric car. We have learned to use these cars as *transportation tools in a mission-specific manner*. An economic analysis found that electric car annual cost was \$1,300, about one-third that of a conventional car used for short-trip driving which accounts for 70% of all driving missions. The advantage comes from the long life of an electric. This ability threatens the auto industry practice of selling a new car to every family every few years. My short-trip driving is in a 24-year old converted Mazda RX-7 that has been an electric for 14 years.

Recharging is not the problem Mr. Bedard implies. After driving we plug them in at our garages, a 10-second process. Some have plug-in privileges at work for their commute. Recharging is automatic; taking place during the car's idle period.

The battery electric car has another unique advantage. It uses any energy source that generates electricity - photovoltaic, wind, hydroelectric, natural gas, coal or nuclear fuel. Our electricity in the Chicago region is produced from energy sources that are 65% nuclear, 30% coal, 2% natural gas, and the rest from unidentified purchases. A diverse energy source will become increasingly important as the world finite supply of petroleum is consumed. In fifty years only 25% of the original supply will remain. Increased drilling will only hasten this depletion.

Sincerely,

/s/ William H. Shafer
FVEAA President