



The Ho, Ho, Hybrid Vehicle and Alternative Fuel Report

December 15, 2015

The fine print: This report is a summary of articles appearing in popular, business, and technical media referring to the impact of fuel costs and fuel efficiency on vehicle technology, development, and markets. At the end of the report is a list of all articles summarized, with hyperlinks to internet sources where available. Some articles may require free registration or paid subscriptions to access. *The Hybrid Vehicle and Alternative Fuel Report* (ISSN: 1946-1011) is compiled, written, and edited by Thomas L. R. Smith, Ph. D., Economic Analysis Branch of the Budget and Financial Analysis Division, Washington State Department of Transportation. Contact *The Hybrid Vehicle and Alternative Fuel Report's* editor at smithtm@wsdot.wa.gov or (360) 705-7941. Contributions of news items, original articles, positive comments about *The Report*, and cookies are welcome. Please send cookies. And not the computer kind.

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Upcoming Publication Schedule: There will only be one issue of the *Hybrid Report* in December. Vacation plans for the entire *Hybrid Report* staff make the edition scheduled for the 30th of December impossible. We will see you in January, when we return to our regular twice monthly schedule. In the meantime, Merry Christmas, Happy Hannukah¹, Happy Kwanza, Have a Cool Yule, and Season's Greetings. Oh yes, Happy New Year.

NATIONAL HYBRID, ELECTRIC, AND PLUG-IN HYBRID VEHICLE SALES

November sales for hybrids, electric cars, and plug-in hybrids were not great. They weren't real bad, but nothing to write home about. According to the numbers published by *Hybrid Cars* (Cobb, December 2, 2015), hybrid car sales were down 16% from November 2014. Hybrid sales only accounted for 1.9% of the new car market, the lowest market share since September 2011. Much of the malaise in the market is due to the lack of performance by the three Prii. They were responsible for 49.8% of the hybrid market, but failed to keep up with previous performance of the brand. Toyota hybrids still dominate the market, with 74.2% of all hybrids sold. Ford's Fusion was the only non-Toyota to break into the top 5, while Hyundai and Kia broke into the top 10.

The plug-in market performed better with the introduction of the new Volt. This car is available in 11 states, and with wider availability in all markets next year, the sector is expected to grow. As it is, plug-ins accounted for 0.3% of the new car market. The sector was dominated by GM, with 47.8% of sales going to the Volt, alone. GM had another 1.6% of sales from the Cadillac ELR. Ford took the number two and three slots

¹ We know, Hannukah ended last night.

with the Fusion and C-Max, while the BMW X5 came in fourth and the Porsche Cayenne in fifth. The Toyota Prius plug-in dropped out of the top five, dropping all the way to 8th place (Cobb, December 2, 2015).

Electric vehicles had a good month. Sales were up from October, but down from November last year. Regardless, November sales were above the annual average share and almost met the record. Tesla led the sector and had its best ever sales, with 50.8% of the electric market. The Nissan Leaf was a distant second, with 17.3% of the electric market. Sales are expected to pick up. Most other electric cars had negligible sales. Over all, fully electric cars accounted for 0.78% of the new car market. The three sectors, combined, accounted for 3% of the new car market (Cobb, December 2, 2015).

HYBRIDS

Lawmakers interested in increasing sales of plug-in hybrids and electric cars may want to consider research by UCLA's Luskin Center for Innovation. According to *Los Angeles Times* (Weikel, November 10, 2015), the study found that allowing plug-in vehicles into carpool lanes is a major incentive for buying the vehicles. The research finds that HOV access motivated 40% of the purchases of plug-ins. The motivation varies from model to model, however. Tesla owners may look at the ability to get into HOV lanes as something nice to have, but they are more interested in other issues, while HOV access could be the deciding factor for a buyer of a Volt or a Leaf. How important is HOV access? For many drivers in the LA area, HOV access can cut commute times in half. It also turns out that California only has about 4,000 HOV access stickers to give plug-in hybrid cars owners, *HybridCars* (Cobb, November 23, 2015) reports. At the current rate of issue, that will last about two months. The legislature could raise the number of stickers available, which it has three times in the past. While it is probably coincidental, a 4.5 km HOV lane on Canada's Highway 20 in Quebec is now open to plug-in vehicles (*CTV Montreal*, November 17, 2015).

The Commonwealth of Virginia apparently hasn't seen the study. That state will end hybrid access to the HOV lanes on Interstate 66, when Virginia replaces the lanes with toll lanes, radio station *WAMU 88.5* (Di Caro, November 23, 2015) reports. Over 18,000 cars have "clean fuel" license plates and can use the HOV lanes, however, the privilege will end in 2017. Meanwhile, our neighbors to the north have eliminated tolls for plug-in cars on the A30 highway south of Montreal, *Global News* (Sargeant, December 4, 2015) gleans.

Automakers in the U. S. are getting a break on the implementation of hybrid and electric car noisemakers, *Reuters* (Shepardson, November 24, 2015) reports. Congress passed a law back in 2013 that hybrids and electric cars would have to make noise at low speeds as a warning to pedestrians. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) said in July the regulations on the noisemakers would be ready in November. Now, the agency says the rules aren't ready because they have make

“additional coordination.” NHTSA did not specify what the additional coordination entailed.

In what is possibly a test, Ford is offering California and Maryland buyers of the plug-in C-Max Energi free charging for three years, *Autoblog* (Blanco, November 17, 2015) blogged. Owners of these vehicles can charge at any of 500 NRG EVgo and SemaConnect chargers. Perhaps the deal will be expanded to other states and Ford’s other electric cars, but no one is saying at this time.

New York City plans to have the nation’s largest fleet of plug-in hybrid and electric vehicles by 2025, *The New York Times* (Grynbaum, December 1, 2015) tells. The City will replace half of the roughly 5,500 non-emergency sedans in the fleet with plug-ins and electric cars as the fleet turns over. The City also plans to spend \$50 to \$80 million to expand its charger system. New York expects the fleet expansion to reduce its emissions by 50%.

Iran’s capital will get 10,000 hybrid taxis over the next three years, *Tehran Times* (December 7, 2015) ticks. The Taxi Driving Organization plans to import hybrid taxis that meet the Euro-5 standard in a push to reduce pollution in Tehran.

Hyundai (December 7, 2015) announced in a [press release](#) that it will introduce a new car in 2016 that will offer three different drivetrains: gasoline-electric hybrid, plug-in hybrid, and all-electric. Most automakers will offer an internal combustion option and a hybrid, or a hybrid and plug-in hybrid version. This is the first where an automaker is offering the big three alternative powertrains for a single auto. The new car is called the IONIQ. The car will be introduced in Korea in January 2016 and in New York in March 2016 at autoshowings in those locations.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

A new report from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) says that electric work trucks are not very popular in California, *Green Fleet* (November 13, 2015) relays. There are fewer than 500 electric work trucks in the medium to heavy duty categories. The largest group, 300, is in the medium duty range but is used in local delivery operations. There are only 40 transit buses and 4 electric school buses. The main reason for the lack of popularity, according to the report is battery costs, which increases the price of electric vehicles over standard vehicles. Electric work trucks can cost three times as much as its diesel counterpart. Prices are coming down though. By 2020, electric trucks will only cost twice as much as diesel trucks.

Connecticut’s Department of Energy and Environmental Protection just made \$2 million available for rebates and grants to encourage the purchase and use of electric vehicles, *CT Post* (Cummings, November 18, 2015) posted. Consumers and businesses interested in buying electric cars and plug-in hybrids have \$1 million available in rebates.

Rebates range from \$750 for vehicles at the lowest end of all-electric range to \$3,000 for the longest range vehicles. So far, Connecticut has distributed \$632,000 in rebates before the latest influx of cash. The other million dollars is for business that want to add electric vehicles to fleets or who want to install charging stations.

The Ukrainian government has effectively lowered the price of electric cars in that country by 28%, *Ukraine Today* (November 25, 2015) reports. The Ukrainian parliament abolished customs duties, value added tax, and excise tax on electric cars.

Currently, when electric car owners are out and about, they have to make sure that the charging station they pull up to is in a network they are a member of or they need to have multiple charging network memberships. There is now a new association of charging networks that allow for the same payment system across networks, *Plugin Cars* (Berman, November 29, 2015) says. The ROEV² Association is made up of ChargePoint, CarCharging/Blink, and NRG EVgo charging system operators and BMW, Nissan, Audi, and Honda. The new system will be available in the spring. ROEV will attempt to get other charging system operators on board and attract additional automakers.

While visiting Paris for the 21st annual Conference of Parties (COP21) climate change conference, Washington's Governor Jay Inslee announced that 20% of the state government's passenger vehicle purchase will have to be electric by 2017, *KUOW* (Ahearn, December 8, 2015) reported. Currently, the state's goal is 1%.

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

The U. S. Army³ signed a deal with General Motors to install a fuel cell power train in a reconnaissance vehicle, *Automotive News* (Truett, November 11, 2011) noted on Veterans Day. The Army has several interests in fuel cell technology. Fuel cell vehicles are much quieter than traditional internal combustion engine vehicles, fuel cell vehicles can act as electric generators in the field, and fuel cell vehicles reduce dependency on a petroleum fuel network. Even though the Army would still need to transport fuel to the forward area, hydrogen and other gasses are lighter and easier to transport than petroleum.

COMING TO A LOCATION NEAR YOU: The latest news on new charging stations which may or may not be somewhere close to you.

United States: If you work for the U. S. Department of Transportation (U. S. DOT), 500 chargers are coming your way over the next ten years, Minnesota's *Star Tribune* (Harlow, November 19, 2015) tries. U. S. DOT is the first federal agency to

² No telling what ROEV stands for. Their website does not explain. We bet it's pronounced, "Rove."

³ The Editor's former employer, 1982-1998.

participate in the U. S. Department of Energy's Workplace Charging Challenge. Some 240 employers have taken the challenge to provide chargers for employees.

Two new charging stations are available to electric car drivers around Manchester, Vermont, the *Manchester Journal* (McKeever, November 18, 2015) jots. The owners of Zoey's Double Hex restaurant installed a level 2 charger in their parking lot just off State Route 7. The other charger is in downtown Manchester at the Northshire Bookstore. Another charging station opened about 130 miles to the north in Williston, outside Burlington, Vermont, *VTDigger* (Green Mountain Power, December 7, 2015) scoops. The Williston charger is at the Hannaford Supermarket & Pharmacy. The station has both fast and level 2 chargers. The charger is part of the NRG EVgo system.

If your electric car makes it through the Donner Pass you have new charging stations in two locations in Truckee, California, the *Sierra Sun* (Roedel, November 23, 2015) says. Two level 2 stations were installed at the Truckee Depot in downtown Truckee and another two were installed at the Pioneer Commerce Center at Interstate 80.

Sometime next year, the town of Glens Falls, New York, north of Albany, will have charging stations in its new parking garage on Park Street, the *Post Star* (Thompson, November 27, 2015) posted. The president of the Warren County Economic Development Committee said the charger or chargers would be available next spring. Electric car drivers who park on Park Street will have to pay a fee to charge, although what that fee is has not been determined.

If you want an electric charging station in your home, there are a lot of questions you have to answer. But do not fear, *Transport Evolved* (Thwaite, November 29, 2015) published a buyers' guide developed by the president of Plug In America. The guide does not lead you to specific charging stations, but helps you decide what is most appropriate for your electric car. The buyers' guide is the first in a plan series on home units. The next article in the series will cover installation.

Atlanta's⁴ Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport plans to install 18 charging stations when it rebuilds its parking garages, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* (Yamanouchi, November 30, 2015) considers. But don't rush to the airport in your electric car. It could take eighty years before the parking garages are built and there are no chargers at the airport now.

In New Orleans,⁵ at least one charging station is going away, *The New Orleans Advocate* (Adelson, November 30, 2015) vocalizes. Vlad Ghelase, New Orleans man, installed a charger on public right of way in front of his house. Mr. Ghelase does not have a driveway, so the only place he could put his charger for his new Nissan was on the

⁴ One of the Editor's many former home towns.

⁵ Also one of the Editor's many former home towns.

street. The City of New Orleans has informed him that the charger has to go. Besides being on public property, the electric lines to the charger cross property lines, which is also illegal. At least one City official believes the problem can be solved if the City leases the right of way to Mr. Ghelase. But for the moment, Mr. Ghelase cannot charge his electric car at home.

Valparaiso, Indiana, will install two level 2 charging stations, *The Northwest Indiana Times* (Earnshaw, December 7, 2015) says. The chargers were paid for through a South Shore Clean Cities program that covers up to \$3,000 of the installation fee. The city has not determined exactly where the chargers will go, or what the charging charge will be.

The Nebraska Community Energy Alliance installed a charging station at its office in Lincoln, *The Lincoln Journal Star* (December 8, 2015) elucidates.

The Cupertino Library in Cupertino, California, home of a major computer company, opened two charging stations, the *San Jose Mercury News* (Myllenbeck, No Date) noted on December 9. The stations, free to the public, were funded by a California Energy Commission Grant.

Around the World: Paris had 90 new charging spots thanks to Renault-Nissan for the COP21 climate change conference, *Renault-Nissan* (November 19, 2015) said in a press release. The chargers will charge 200 electric vehicles that the company provided for the conference. Once the conference ends, some of the chargers will be removed, but an unknown number will stay for public use. Renault-Nissan also provided electric shuttle buses.

Hamilton, New Zealand, on the North Island opened a fast charging station on Maui Street, *Stuff* (Thomas, December 4, 2015) says. New Zealand's Transport Minister opened the charger. The charger is free to any of the tiny island nation's 800 electric vehicles.

Winnipeg, Canada's, airport has eight new charging stations, *CBC* (December 4, 2015) says. The stations are open to the public. Another six may be added, but those would be used for airport vehicles.

Twenty million Canadian dollars' worth of charging stations will be coming to Ontario Province, the Premier for Ontario announced at COP21 in Paris, Canada's *Toronto Star* (Hamilton, December 8, 2015) stated. The money will be available for level 2 chargers installed at work places and fast chargers for places where people only park a short time. This is supposed to "jump-start" a charger network and additional funds should appear in the Ontario budget in the next budget cycle.



OTHER TECHNOLOGY

The U. S. Army and University of Maryland⁶ have developed a new form of lithium ion battery that provides the same power and lifespan of current lithium batteries but without the various risks that lithium batteries are noted for, [The University](#) (Tune, November 19, 2015) says. The “water-in-salt” technology reduces the fire risk of lithium batteries. A more complete discussion of the research is in the journal *Science*, but you have to pay for access.

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⁶ One of the Editor's many, many Alma Maters.



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That'll do.