



The Hybrid Vehicle and Alternative Fuel Report

The National Drive Electric Week Edition

September 15, 2014

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 hyperlinks 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.

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NATIONAL HYBRID, ELECTRIC, AND PLUG-IN VEHICLE SALES

August 2014 was a great month for automobile sales in general, and it wasn't bad for hybrids, electrics, and plug-ins. For the industry as a whole, more cars were sold last month than at any time since January 2006. The hybrid, plug-in, and electric vehicle markets shared in this success. According to the sales stats at [Hybrid Cars](#) (Cobb, September 4, 2014), 48,208 hybrids were sold in August, accounting for 3.05% of the new car market. The three Prius models made up 47% of the hybrid market. The Prii took first, second, and fourth in the rankings. Overall, Toyota hybrids took seven of top 10 spots in hybrid sales. Ford Fusion and C-Max were five and six, respectively, while the Hyundai Sonata took ninth.

Plug-in hybrids performed well, also, taking 0.37% of the total car market. The Chevy Volt led the market at 42.4% of plug-in sales. The Ford Fusion and C-Max came in second and third. Ford took 38.4% of the plug-in market. Toyota's Plug-in Prius was an also-ran with only 13.8% of sales.

Even though many automotive market analysts and talking heads keep declaring that electric cars are dead, electric cars turned in their best sales numbers ever, and that was even during a period of falling gas prices. The electric sector took 0.41% of the market. The Nisan Leaf lead the battery market, taking 49% of the battery cars sold and setting its own all-time high sales record. Tesla, even with declining sales, was number two with 18.5% and new-entry BMW i3 took third with 15.8%. Together, the hybrid, plug-in, and battery sector accounted for 3.83% of the new car market. Never the less, the [Wall Street Journal's](#) (Rogers, September 3, 2014) headline covering the same data says

“Demand Ebbs for Electric, Hybrid Cars.” An analysis by Edmunds.com written up in the *Portland Press Herald* says that while electric vehicle and plug-in sales are showing progress, the hybrid market is slowly declining. An Edmunds analyst says the uptick in electric and plug-in sales is merely “rounding error,” when compared to the size of the hybrid market. Edmunds is among those who say the hybrid and electric market “is winding down.”

HYBRIDS

“**Bus stop, bus goes:**”¹ Transport for London (TfL) will test four hybrid buses that have the ability to wirelessly recharge when the bus pulls up to a bus stop, *The Guardian* (Murray, August 28, 2014) says. The diesel-electric hybrid buses will operate between Canning Town and Walthamstow in London. TfL is currently operating six electric buses and some hydrogen buses.

To help hybrid cars operate more efficiently, Ford is considering using the Global Positioning System (GPS) to let the car know when upcoming terrain is most suited for the gasoline engine or electric motor, *Auto123* (Paquet, September 3, 2014) reported. BMW and Mercedes-Benz already uses GPS as a fuel-saving technology.

The City of Lexington, North Carolina,² approved the purchase of two hydraulic hybrid garbage trucks, *The Lexington Dispatch* (Myers, September 8, 2014) dispatched. The trucks will replace trucks over ten years old that have seen better days. In addition to reducing fuel costs by about \$15,000 annually, the trucks are \$7,000 cheaper than conventional garbage trucks. So put that in your hybrid premium.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

King County Metro, the transit agency that serves Seattle and environs, acquired two battery powered buses, the *Snoqualmie Valley Record* (September 2, 2014) recorded. The Proterra buses were funded by a grant from the Federal Transit Authority. Two-thirds of Metro’s buses are hybrids.

“**Scotch and Soda:**”³ People won’t believe them, they’ll think that they’re just bragging,⁴ but scotch manufacturer Chivas Brothers says that they save £1,600 (\$2,740) on each electric car in their fleet, *Fleet News* (September 3, 2014) says. Chivas introduced hybrids into their fleet back in 2008 with 10 hybrids. Now the company operates 10 electric cars and seven hybrids.

¹ Graham Gouldman, “Bus Stop,” Parlophone, 1966, recorded by The Hollies.

² Near the center of the Universe (Concord, North Carolina) for properly prepared pork barbeque.

³ Dave Guard, “Scotch and Soda,” Beechwood Music Corporation, 1959, recorded by The Kingston Trio on *The Kingston Trio*, Capitol Records, 1958.

⁴ Ibid., with apologies to the late Mr. Guard.

It was just 117 years ago, on September 10, that the first driver in the world was arrested for drunken driving, *Motoramic* (Hyde, September 10, 2014) informs us, when George Smith⁵ ran his London taxi into the side of a building. What is the connection between this event and *The Hybrid Report*, you ask? We answer: the London Taxi in question was a one month old electric-powered taxi.

Nevada beat out four other States to land the Tesla battery “Gigafactory,” *ABC News* (Pritchard & Sonner, September 4, 2014) says. Tesla will build the plant near Reno and employ 6,500 people. Tesla believes making batteries on such a large scale at the 10 million square foot plant, will significantly bring down battery costs. ABC News said Nevada’s Governor negotiated a \$500 million incentive to get the plant, but *The Seattle Times* (Sonner, September 5, 2014) reports that the package could be up to \$1.3 billion. The Governor called a special session of the Legislature to approve the deal.

In these pages, we have often related the struggle Tesla has had with various States’ automobile dealers’ associations. The dealers don’t like Tesla’s direct sales model which eschews (if that’s the word we want) dealership franchises. Dealer associations around the country have lobbied legislatures and licensing authorities to strengthen or enforce restrictions on direct sales by auto manufacturers. The Nevada Franchised Automobile Dealers Association (NFADA) has switched sides and is welcoming Tesla’s stores to the state, *Los Angeles Times* (Fleming, September 10, 2014) tells. Originally planning to protest stores to Nevada’s Department of Motor Vehicles, NFADA changed its position because they thought welcoming Tesla and its Gigafactory (see above) would mean more business for the dealer franchises. As the head of the Association told the Times, people employed by the plant and other jobs generated are:

going to buy automobiles--from my dealers. And they’re not going to buy Teslas. They’re going to be buying pickup trucks from my dealers. You’re going to see a lot of new F-150s and Silverados running up and down I-80.

Last Call: September 15-21 is National Drive Electric Week and there are events scheduled all over the country. For events near you, consult the National Drive Electric Week [website](#). Activities are scheduled in Issaquah, Steilacoom, and Wenatchee here in Washington State. The closest event to our office suite high atop the Washington State Department of Transportation Headquarters Building in Olympia is at Sunnyside Beach in Steilacoom at the picnic Pavilion. The festivities begin at Noon, Saturday, September 20 and run until 3:00 P.M. Nothing extravagant is planned, the organizers tell *The Hybrid Report*. From 12:00 Noon to 12:20 P. M., participants will assemble in the parking lot for a group photo of electric vehicles and their owners. After the photo session, participants will enjoy a pot luck picnic (yes, bring your own food). Organizers will have a grill going and some condiments on hand. Electric vehicle owners will have an opportunity to meet

⁵ No known relation.

other owners and share stories about their driving experiences. Tacoma Nissan will have two Leaf models on display and two of their Leaf experts available. To register for the event, visit the event [website](#). For more information contact Dick Muri at Dick@DickMuri.com or (253) 439-9797.

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Iowa opened the first of three commercial cellulosic ethanol plants on September 3rd, *The Daily Climate* (Lavelle, September 3, 2014) commented. The plant, near Emmetsburg, is part of Project Liberty, a joint venture of DSM of the Netherlands, and POET, a corn ethanol company. The cellulosic ethanol produced at this plant relies on corn stalks and husks, rather than the corn itself, so the relatively high cost of corn is less of a concern with this type of ethanol. It costs about \$3 to produce a gallon of cellulosic ethanol. Two more cellulosic ethanol plants are slated to open.

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: Antioch University New England installed a charging station at its campus in Keene, New Hampshire, *Brattleboro Reformer* (Antioch University, August 27, 2014) informs. The charger was made possible through funding from Public Service New Hampshire.

In California, the top deck of Hermosa Beach's parking garage now has an NRG eVgo fast charging station, *The Beach Reporter* (Stitt, September 5, 2014) reported. The fast charger is the seventh public charger in Hermosa Beach and the only fast charger in town.

About six hours forty minutes to seven hours fifteen minutes (422 miles) north of Hermosa Beach, an undisclosed number of an undisclosed type of chargers was installed at the Bear Valley Visitor Center parking lot at Point Reyes National Seashore, *National Parks Traveler* (Burnett, September 6, 2014) reported. The chargers were installed by a consortium of groups including Marin County and two electric car groups. The Point Reyes National Seashore Association, a non-profit group, will pay for electrical usage.

Around the World: Inverclyde, at the mouth of the Clyde in Scotland and not very far from "the Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond,"⁶ is the latest recipient of a grant from Transport Scotland to establish a charging network, *Inverclyde Now* (August 28, 2014) says. Inverclyde council received £78,000 (\$133,607.40) to install five chargers. A fast charger is slated for the Kempock Street parking lot in Gourrock. Port Glasgow,

⁶ Traditional, "The Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond," *Vocal Melodies of Scotland*, Finlay Dun and John Thompson, eds., Edinburgh: Patterson & Sons, 1841.

Kilmacolm and Greenock will get the others. Users will pay £8 to £10 (\$13.70 to \$17.13) to charge.

Moscow, the one in Russia, not Idaho, will have a 150 charging station network by the end of the year, *RIA Novosti* (September 2, 2014) reports. There are currently 28 charging stations in the Russian capital.

Collège Montmorency in Laval near Montréal added a public level 2 charger in the parking lot on Boulevard de L'Avenir, *CNW Group* (Electric Circuit, September 8, 2014) says. The charger is part of the Electric Circuit charger network in Québec. Including the new charger at the Collège, Laval has 11 level 2 chargers.

A new charger that can recharge a car in 20 to 30 minutes was installed at the George Yard Car Park, in Braintree in England's Essex County, the *Essex Chronicle* (Braintree Chronicle, September 8, 2014) chronicled. The charger was installed as part of a grant from the United Kingdom's Office of Low Emission Vehicles.

OTHER TECHNOLOGY

In our last issue, we told you about General Motors and Zagster's bike sharing program at GM's Warren, Michigan, technical center. Closer to home, Pronto Cycle Share in Seattle is selling memberships in their bike sharing program slated to open October 13, the company (August 25, 2014) said in a [press release](#). A one-year membership will start at \$85 a year. Pronto will have 50 bike stations with 500 bikes around Seattle. Visitors to Seattle will be able to buy one and three day memberships at bike stations. You will also be able to rent helmets. Georgina Willner of WSDOT's Fleet Operations brought this to our attention.

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That is all.