



Press Clippings



Caribbean Journal

In Cayman, the Future of Electric Cars

September 3, 2012



Above: the Wheego LiFe (CJ Photo)

Excerpted from an article by Alexander Britell

GRAND CAYMAN — It began with a small group of cars under a white tent just across from Seven Mile Beach in Grand Cayman — but it could herald the start of a large movement in the Caribbean.

Last week, Cayman Automotive hosted the first-ever Caribbean International Electric Auto Show, an expo putting cutting-edge electric car designs on display.

The show was the effort of Cayman Automotive, which introduced the first electric car to the Caribbean in 2009 and is now the region's exclusive electric dealer.

"Now that the [electric car] law has finally been passed, that the regulation is finally done, customers can now drive an electric vehicle in the Cayman Islands," John Felder, president and CEO of Cayman Automotive, told *Caribbean Journal*. "So this is truly historic."

The Caribbean International Electric Auto show featured six different vehicles, from the Wheego LiFe to an in-development electric roadster from Shockwave Motors.

"You're going to see more and more of these on the road," said Ken Wambold, regional sales manager for Atlanta, Ga.-based Wheego.

Wheego is planning to increase its worldwide dealer network to about 100 by 2015, he said, along with further expansion in Caribbean islands like Puerto Rico and Jamaica and in the Dominican Republic.

The Wheego LiFe vehicle that was on display at Cayman Automotive has a range of about 100 miles, with a top speed of 65 miles per hour.

It takes seven or eight hours to charge the cars at home. Charging at a station, of which Grand Cayman already has two, involves about the time it takes for a run to the local market.

There are plans for 14 to 15 such stations, with the aim of making them solar-powered.

"These islands are absolutely perfect for electric vehicles," Wambold said.

The electric car movement could be particularly beneficial to a region whose fuel costs continue to rise.

For Cayman Automotive, the hope is to sell between 2,000 and 3,000 electric vehicles within the next five years, with a portion of that including fleet sales.

Felder, who is the exclusive dealer for eight other countries in the Caribbean, said an electric motorcycle is also on the way.

"I think that, in the next 10 years, electric cars and hybrids will be dominant, probably controlling 50 percent of the market share in the region," he said. "It just makes sense."



Five Things Electric Car Owners Always Say

By [Jim Motavalli](#) · August 24, 2012

Let me say at the outset that I don't yet own an electric car, so I'm not a member of the club and don't know the secret handshake. But since I spend a considerable percentage of my waking hours interviewing and bantering with card-carrying owners, I think I have the lingo down. And there's a pattern!

True Believers

EV owners tend to be true believers, which is what any movement needs. So here's a few things that LEAF, Volt, Mitsubishi i, Tesla Roadster and even Wheego owners have said to me. I have yet to meet a seriously dissatisfied electric car owner (though judging from some of what I've seen online, there are some out there). Note: I'm leaving out what people also say about their concern for the environment. That's kind of a given. We've yet to get to the point where people are buying electric cars to save money:

I only drive 30 miles a day. EV owners are always at pains to explain that they're daily commutes are well within the car's capabilities. They seldom admit to range anxiety, and I never hear of them complaining about the grandma's house problem—what to do if they need to take a 300-mile trip. In fact, a new survey of EV owners finds that a majority have a plug-in vehicle as their only car. The corollary to this is boasting of the number of miles you've covered on a single charge.

I love how quiet the car is. EV owners celebrate the gentle whirr of their electric motors. Non-believers actually get nervous about this, thinking the cars are going to sneak up on people. They've been turning one of the chief virtues of electrics—no engine noise—into a negative. It's even led to pending federal legislation, the result largely of activism on behalf of the blind community, that will require plug in to emit some kind of sound below 30 mph.

Electric vehicle consultant Chelsea Sexton doesn't see the point: "The goal shouldn't be to make [electric cars] louder but to aim at sucking decibels from all vehicles....Cleaner, quieter transport means higher property values in often economically depressed neighborhoods adjacent to freeways and high-traffic roadways, to say nothing of the health of the families living there and public dollars saved from not building sound walls and other noise abatement measures." The bottom line, she says is that the driver of all kinds of vehicles "have the responsibility not to hit someone."

Charging is easier than getting gas. The onerous task of plugging in looms large for some people, but the people who actually own the cars say it's freed them from the tyranny of gas stations. They love "fueling up" for pennies per gallon equivalent in the garage, then driving past the \$4 a gallon signs. They don't have a problem setting the timer so the car plugs in during peak times and charges off-peak. Still, we shouldn't underestimate how big a change it is for most people—whose fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers all pumped their fuel.

Electric cars have 100 percent torque at zero rpm. They don't always put it that way. Sometimes, I get, "It takes off like a bat out of hell" or "I leave muscle cars in the dust." Basically, they're talking about their cars' zero-to-30 time. It's where the EV shines, and why it works so well for quarter-mile drag races. On the short course, it's unbeatable.

“It’s been X days or months since I burned any gas.” The exact form of this statement varies, but the fact that people say it speaks of a sea change in American driving behavior. Once you’ve plugged in, you don’t go back. Driving gas-free miles appears to be incredibly liberating, like giving up smoking or getting released from jail. A variation of this is plug-in hybrid owners who make a point of saying how little they use the gas engine. Jay Leno is like that with his Volt. “I’m thrilled that almost all of our local city driving miles are electric—with no gas or tailpipe emissions,” says Gina Coplon-Newfield, who heads the Sierra Club’s electric vehicle initiative and recently bought a plug-in Prius. “Like all EVs, our car is quiet, smooth, and much gentler to the planet than our last car.”

Lots of Good Things

There are lots of other things that come up—the \$7,500 federal income tax credit they got, the fact that they’re the first in their town or on their block to plug in, and what happened when they attempted longer trips.

Jackie Eskin, who recently bought a Nissan LEAF in Fairfield, Connecticut, summed up what owning an electric car is like in an email to me. “I am extremely pleased with my LEAF. I love that it might help affect our foreign policy and make us more self-sufficient. And I love that it is zero emission, and I don’t have to buy gas or oil or transmission fluid, etc. But, incredibly, I love that it is such fun to drive. I’m so glad that all these people, you included, are working to make this work for all of us. I’m happy to be part of this revolution.”

web2carz



CEO of Wheego, Mike McQuary

Wheego Electric Cars CEO Mike McQuary On electric cars and the future of transportation.

By: [Steven Karras](#)

Web2Carz Staff Writer

Published: August 18th, 2012

"I realized that electric-car owners were people who are unafraid to try new technology."

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heego Electric Cars first appeared on the scene in 2009 with a two-seat compact car called the Wheego Whip. The Georgia-based company has since begun to make a name for itself in the electric-car community and shows signs of longevity.

Web2Carz had the opportunity to talk to Wheego's CEO Mike McQuary about the history and his vision on the company's future.

Mike, what were you doing before you wound up in the electric car business?

My last large career experience was starting up the internet service provider Mindspring. We weren't the first ISP, and there were a lot of big competitors in the space, but our focus was about offering the best

possible internet experience, and to that end we always focused on the customer experience and having the best technology to back it up. We grew to be the second largest ISP in the world behind AOL (every year that I was involved we won the JD Powers Award for best ISP) and then conducted a merger with the third largest ISP provider which we named Earthlink. I stayed on as president and CEO of Earthlink and when I left we had five million happy subscribers.

Jumping forward a few years, I was watching the documentary, *Who Killed the Electric Car?* I wasn't so much struck by the story of how the legislation was overturned and the cars were pulled back. But I was moved by the drivers that were interviewed who said things like, "I loved my electric car and was sad when they took it away" or "I would buy another one tomorrow if I could". The only time I ever heard that in a voice of a consumer in my career had been in my early days at Mindspring when grateful customers would tell us things like, "I love Mindspring and got two co-workers to sign up for your service and here's 10 extra dollars because I don't want you to go out of business."

Why did that resonate with you?

Well, I knew that type of customer and consumer base really well from my days of working at Mindspring. And, I realized that electric-car owners were people who maybe weren't complete geeks about technology, but who are also unafraid to try new technology, particularly if they could get the proper hand



holding and customer service that would make them feel comfortable in answering any questions about the product. And just that, innately said, it sounded like these people need an electric car and I wondered if I could build them one. That set me about the venture that eventually became Wheego Electric Cars.

It sounds like your motivations weren't exactly dollar driven.

I think too many people get into business because they think they're going to make money- some are lucky and make money- but I think the right reason

to do it is to satisfy the customer's needs and if you focus all your attention on achieving that goal you'll end up with a significant company and you'll grow plenty big enough, make money, and investors will have a great return on the money they've invested.

Did you think you'd find the same success amidst the established competitors, like Tesla Motors who have already been in the electric-car business for a while?

I did and I figured there were going to be deeply entrenched competitors that couldn't move as nimbly as we could, and who might pay lip service to their customer and wouldn't let the customer be the deciding factor in driving changes to the product or service. Early in my career, one of my first jobs was with the Mobil Corporation, which at the time was one of the largest corporation in the world, so I was familiar with what huge corporations do well and what they don't do well. Having had that experience I wasn't intimidated to go up against big competitors.



Big or small what is the common denominator in a company's success?

Understanding your customer base and hearing the customer's need in the product when you're starting out. When I was just starting out in the electric car business I clearly heard, "I need a car that goes 100 miles on a charge." Well I think that's more of a psychological hurdle than a factual hurdle because AAA puts out numbers on the driving habits in the United States and 85 percent of drivers here drive less than 30 miles a day.

So, the factual need differs from the psychological need but since people's buying habits are driven by that psychological need we knew that our cars that needed to go 100 miles on a charge. And, since people were nervous about the technology we also knew the cars had to work reliably; we knew the car couldn't be complicated to recharge and just be able to just plug it in and know that it's charging. We also knew people would have questions about any new technology. Where you're combining the latest software and hardware, there are certainly issues and you'd want to get someone on the phone right away at the company that could talk them through their issues. We want our drivers to be our biggest advocates or even evangelists for our product and we want them telling their neighbor or coworker that it's a great car and they should consider it the next time they're buying a car. We don't necessarily want to be the biggest company but we want to have the happiest customers.

Price is also a concern.

Yes. The other thing we're concentrating on is making the car as affordable as possible. Tesla has done a marvelous job validating the electric car space but frankly it's a small set of people who could afford to pay 100k for an automobile. And while I think they're brilliant at what they do they're after a completely different marketing segment than we are. Our mission is to make an affordable automobile and make electric cars a significant segment of people's personal transportation needs. Tesla is going to be the dominant provider of cars in the luxury segment we're going for the affordable car segment-both sport cars and high end luxury sedans-their competitors are Mercedes Benz and BMWs. We're really at the other end of the spectrum and we're trying to make the most affordable electric car. I can't see us ever selling a car priced over 55 thousand dollars.

Let's talk about the benefits of owning an electric car.

Affordability at the gas pump for one, and helping people's personal home budget by reducing the amount of money they're spending on gasoline. They also address clean air issues. In our major metropolitan cities air quality is an issue and with zero emissions contributing to that problem, you'll absolutely be removing a lot of carbon from the atmosphere versus driving a gas powered car. There's a lot of debate raging about climate change but if you listen to the leading experts, our carbon emissions are affecting changes in the global climate and electric cars are a significant improvement upon that and could be part of that a solution as well.

On the political spectrum, in the US in particular, our foreign policies have been clearly dictated on our dependence on foreign oil and if we could unyoke ourselves from that we'll make better foreign policy decisions.

What about skeptics who say that there are still going to be adverse effects on the environment with electricity because there's coal being burned. Are we trading one form of pollution for another?

Absolutely not. Look, I used to work for Mobil Corporation, an oil corporation and cradle to grave, if you're going to look at the creation of the energy you're talking about going all the way back to the actual drilling into the earth to extract the oil and the transportation and distribution of the oil to its ultimate end at the gas pump and the emissions out of the tail pipe. Compare that even to the worst source of electricity generation which from a pollution standpoint is coal burning and you're still significantly -- by an order of magnitude- better off driving electric cars than you are internal combustion cars.

What needs to be done to influence the public's perception about the benefits of electric cars?

A lot of it is simple education. When you get down to the facts and science its really irrefutable. But it's a lot easier from a lobbying perspective to make it a political issue. I think clearly most even-minded politicians (left or right) are going to say that electric cars are a good thing but you're also going to get the radicals on both sides who aren't going to listen to facts and be histrionic and emotional about what they think people should be doing. But over time facts will bear out and rational thinking is going to replace the political rhetoric and when that happens electric cars will be adopted more and more.

Are you optimistic?

Yes. The fact that every single major automaker is now working on or has launched an electric car is complete validation of the fact that there's a demand and that the electric car is here to stay and will continue to grow in the future.

Have you gone completely electric?

I think you need the right tool for the right job. I've got a Wheego that's my daily driver for work. But I also have four kids and since they all can't fit in a Wheego I have a minivan when I have to take them for soccer games.

Road test: A Seattleite tries an all-electric car for a week

By Cody Ellerd Bay, July 15, 2012



The writer in her loaned Wheego Whip. (Courtesy of Cody Ellerd Bay)

I have to admit I was skeptical. I'm all for clean energy and better air quality, but, in my mind, electric cars are driven only by employees of forward-thinking city governments or wealthy CEOs who can afford to call a car a "toy." Normal people who just need to get things done and do it on a budget? Well, wouldn't that be nice someday?

So when I sat down in the driver's seat of the Wheego Whip that Seattle's MC Electric Vehicles loaned me for a week, I thought this little game would be fun. I could enjoy a short reprieve from ballooning summer gas prices and give myself a pat on the back for spewing fewer emissions — and then go back to my perfectly satisfied life as a Subaru Outback owner.

MC owner Jim Johnson gave me a quick tutorial of my loaner, a tiny, red all-electric two-seater with a 40-mile range and a top speed of 35 mph. I put the key in the ignition and turned it; nothing. "Don't worry, it's on," Johnson said. "It just doesn't make any noise."

I pulled out of the dealership in the International District and looked at the clock. The all-too-familiar panic hit: It was 5:50 p.m., and I had a 6 p.m. haircut in Georgetown.

As the little Whip muscled its way up Beacon Hill with a determined, high-pitched hum, I pushed the gas pedal to the floor and went exactly zero mph faster. When they say 35, they mean 35 and not a single mile more. Yikes. This is not the best car for someone who is always running late.

There are high-speed, highway-capable all-electric cars on the market, of course, including the Nissan Leaf, Honda Fit electric and Ford Focus electric. The downside is that there are long waits for delivery, and they typically cost upwards of \$30,000. MC sells the Whip for about \$17,000 and offers financing at about 2.5 percent interest. A monthly car payment of around \$200 would indeed be less than I'm currently spending on gas.

If my hair stylist was miffed about my lateness, it was quickly erased by her curiosity about the funny-looking ride I had pulled up in. Driving an electric car, if nothing else, is a quick way to make friends.

Back at home, I parked the Whip in my backyard, running an extension cord through the kitchen to charge it overnight. Plugging into a standard wall outlet for the 10 hours needed for a full charge, according to Johnson, adds about 30 cents to your utility bill.

Over the next week, I took the bus to work as usual and drove the Whip to run errands in the neighborhood, go to a Mariners game (where I was able to squeeze into a tiny parking space no one else could fit into) and meet friends for weekend brunch. I kept an extension cord in the trunk in case I needed to pull up to a coffee shop for a cappuccino and emergency fuel charge, but, given the short trips I was making, the necessity never arose.

And, I must say, zipping past gas stations showing prices at more than \$4 per gallon made the 30 cents I had spent to run my errands that day feel more and more satisfying.

At the end of the week, I returned the Whip and got into my Outback. I turned the key and the engine rumbled to life. It felt like an awful lot of car for just a drive down the road back home, but off I went — though not before having to stop for gas.

Popular Mechanics

Phil Berg, July 2012

9 Electric Cars You Can Actually Buy in 2012

A new batch of electric cars is joining the big names on the market such as the Nissan Leaf. So we thought it was time to catch up on the EV scene and see how the new entrants stack up. More electric cars are coming, too, including the two-seaters MINI E, Smart ForTwo, and Audi E-tron, and four- and five-seaters Scion iQ EV, Volkswagen E-Up and E-Golf, and a Cadillac ELR version of the Volt.



Wheego LiFe

Range: 100 miles (est.)

Price: \$32,995

Wheego has sold less than 40 of the tiny Smart ForTwo-size LiFe in the past year, though that's not unusual in the low-volume world of EVs (Ford sold just 10 of its Focus EVs in the first three months of 2012.) The two-seater LiFe is a product of Wheego's build-to-order assembly strategy, where each car ships without drivelines from China and is finished in Atlanta. The company also sells a low-speed golf-cart-style electric vehicle called the Whip, though the LiFe is the more powerful of the two.

Wheego Electric Cars Named a GE Energy WattStation™ Distributor



ATLANTA, June 7, 2012 – WHEEGO ELECTRIC CARS, a U.S. manufacturer of all-electric cars, today announced that they have been named a distributor for GE Energy’s line of WattStation Wall Mount electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Wheego will distribute the Level 2 GE WattStation Wall Mount EV charging units at select Wheego dealerships nationwide. “GE is a trusted brand, and we are happy to be able to offer the WattStation EV charging product line to our drivers,” said Wheego CEO Mike McQuary. “While EV charging stations are a relatively new business, GE Energy’s Industrial Solutions business brings more than 130 years of experience in designing and manufacturing reliable electrical distribution products. GE has an excellent track record with the WattStation product line. I know they will deliver a top quality EV charging station to our drivers and fleet managers.”

The GE WattStation Wall Mount charges the Wheego 30kWh battery pack from 50 percent to a complete charge in approximately 4.5 hours. Suitable for both indoor and outdoor installations, the GE WattStation Wall Mount is NEMA 3R, rated to resist rain, sleet and even ice. Operating on a 208-240V AC circuit, the WattStation Wall Mount can be installed in new or existing construction, and can either be hardwired for more permanent installations or plugged into a NEMA 6-50 receptacle for simple removal.

Wheego dealers, through the GE EV Certified Installer program, can also tap into GE’s network of service installation providers for assistance in making their customer’s EV charging solution a reality at home or place of business.

The WheegoLiFe comes fully equipped with driver and passenger airbags, anti-lock brakes, power windows and locks, and optional air conditioning. The LiFe travels approximately 100 miles on a single charge, and can be recharged from any 100V outlet, or from a J1772-

compliant charging station such as the GE WattStation. It is available in red, white, blue, black, silver, and green. A two-seat subcompact car, the WheegoLiFe'sfit, finish and features are designed for today's environmentally conscious commuters. The LiFe starts at \$32,995 and qualifies for a \$7500 Federal tax credit and many state and local tax incentives.

About Wheego Electric Cars

Wheego Electric Cars is an innovation-driven and environmentally conscious manufacturer of Electric Vehicles (EVs). Under the leadership of Mike McQuary, CEO and former MindSpring entrepreneur, Wheego Electric Cars has become a leader in the integration of advanced technology components. Wheego Electric Cars is one of the first EV companies to deliver affordable fully capable, street legal all-electric cars for everyday consumer use. The Wheego line of electric vehicles is emission-free, making them an ideal choice for consumers, fleets and businesses who want to reduce their carbon footprint. Wheego is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. The cars are assembled in Ontario, California.

For more information about Wheego, visit the company website at www.wheego.net.

Wheego Makes Fleet Deal in Oklahoma City

Automotive Digest, June 2012



Fleets have become very open minded about testing out plug-in electric vehicles to reduce fuel consumption costs and sometimes to comply with emissions standards. Fleets provide a big opportunity for major OEMs and startups like Coda Automotive and Wheego. The Wheego Whip is being tested by the Oklahoma City Police Dept. as a way to transport parking violation inspectors through the city. The two-passenger cars are powered by a rechargeable battery pack.

The department said the vehicles may be small, but they have all the conveniences of a full-size car without the gas-guzzling costliness. Another benefit is that they're right-sized for doing the job. "The department had been looking for somewhere to introduce some environmentally-friendly vehicles into service," said Capt. Don Martin. "We found a model of vehicles built by Wheego that fit what we needed and provided the comforts, the security... and the size that we needed for parking enforcement." When fully charged, the cars can drive up to 30 miles per day. They'll patrol areas in downtown Oklahoma City and Bricktown.

Selling Electrics, One Car At A Time

by Jim Motavalli, June 1, 2012

For the start-ups, selling unfamiliar electric cars to Americans means a lot of guerrilla marketing. That's why Coda and Tesla are opening stores in malls, and Wheego is co-sponsoring contests and selling into police fleets.



CALLING ALL ELECTRIC CARS: This Wheego LiFe is on parking ticket duty in Oklahoma City. (Photo: Oklahoma City Police Department)

The [Wall Street Journal headline](#) earlier this week was pretty stark: “Car Battery Start-Ups Fizzle.” The basic point is that battery plants built with federal grants got ahead of the still-emerging electric vehicle market. In other words, there's a lot of battery capacity and, so far, few cars. It doesn't look like President Obama is going to get his 1 million EVs by 2015. The feds were overly optimistic about the electric timetable. It's going to take a while before there's an electric in every driveway, though I definitely think that will happen. Most of us don't know much about the cars, and we've never heard of the many, often-minuscule start-ups that are starting to put their vehicles on the road.

Both the start-up Coda and the more established Tesla Motors have opened stores in malls, aimed not just at selling cars but also educating the public about what electric cars are and how they work. Tesla has gotten more than 600,000 people through its seven existing “new design” stores, and that's a lot of education going on.

This week, General Electric — a big supporter of EVs because of its WattStation EV chargers (some of them [solar](#) powered) — opened a 6,000-square-foot Vehicle Innovation Center designed to teach people about electrics, as well as natural gas, hydrogen and propane cars. The primary target is fleets, and indeed they are likely to be the EV's biggest customers in the early days. We probably need more of these, all over the country. The first one is in Eden Prairie, Minn.

Ever heard of Wheego? Missed the Super Bowl commercial? That's because they didn't have one. Atlanta-based Wheego is tiny. It builds both the Whip, a low-speed vehicle (LSV)

that can cruise around gated communities and serve meter maids, and the LiFe, a full-scale, highway-capable electric car. The Smart-look-a-like car is sourced from China, with electric components added in the U.S.

So far, Wheego has sold “a few dozen” LiFes, says Susan Nicholson, a vice president and spokesperson. For any other company, that would be fatal, but Wheego didn’t gamble big on government funding, and it isn’t accruing unsold inventory.



Meet Asma Henry (left), the very first Wheego LiFe owner. In the small world department, I discovered she’s also a good friend of my brother, and an avid reader of my MNN articles, which helped spark her interest in electric cars and the Wheego. “I used to drive a Volvo, and told my mechanic back in 2010 that I wanted my next car to be electric. He told me about a local dealership in Atlanta that was selling the Wheego. When I bought the car, we had a little ceremony because I was the first buyer, and I said that I work as a tuberculosis researcher and clean air is important.”

Henry says the LiFe “has been very good, but a bit rattly. You can’t drive it really long distances, but I took it to the airport a few times and it was fine. My husband and I just really believe in electric cars. We just wish there were more charging stations in Fort Collins, Colorado, where we’ve recently moved. The car is on a transporter on its way out here.”

As CEO Mike McQuary explained to me, Wheego is building cars as it gets orders. And it’s engaging in some interesting guerrilla marketing. “People are realizing that there are a lot of creative ways to use the Wheego LiFe — both as a specialty-use vehicle, and a marketing attention getter,” he told me from China, where he’s drumming up new business. Right now, car sales are on hold until Wheego can get a federal waiver exempting it from needing electronic stability control. But the cars are trickling out.

The Oklahoma City police department has taken delivery of four Whip LSVs for use in parking enforcement. They don’t have to hit the highway, and with 40-mph on the top end, they’re not going to be chasing speeders. The air-conditioned LSVs replace open-air electrics. “They’ve got some weather in Oklahoma,” Nicholson told me.

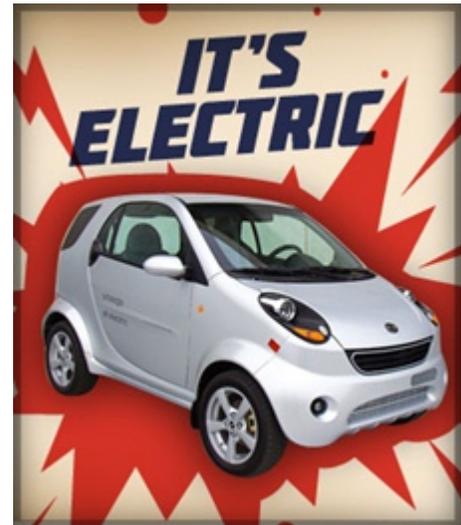
Wheego is on Oklahoma’s radar because of a now-rescinded state law there allowed a 50 percent income tax credit on electrics. People there were buying LSVs for an incredible \$3,000, and several hundred have been sold.

The Whip is indeed great for giving out parking tickets and meter reading, and now Wheego is marketing them that way. It has some leftover 2010 LSVs it can let go for maybe \$11,000 (they list for \$19,000). The competition is the Gem, a glorified golf cart. How much could a full page in Police Fleet Manager magazine cost?

There's more. A highway-ready Wheego is being offered as a prize in a contest offered by the GTE Federal Credit Union. The lucky winner will be announced in October. Here's a video about it:

There are a few catches. You have to be 18 and live in Florida. And you have to take out a GTE home loan. Details, details.

The contest (right) was the brainchild of energetic Florida-based dealership Suncoast Electric Vehicles, which sells everything from golf carts to Vantage battery trucks and vans. Richard Nimphie, who owns Suncoast, told me, "EV buyers today are a relatively small niche, and the cost of entry into the market is relatively high. Still, a fairly significant amount of people in surveys we've done have shown interest in eventually buying an electric car. So what we've been doing is taking the car where those people are."



And how. Suncoast has shown up at Saturday morning farmers markets, at kids' events at the University of South Florida, at screenings of "Revenge of the Electric Car," at the downtown Tampa clean air fair, and the AAA green vehicles initiative. It even has a mutually satisfying alliance with the Salvador Dali Museum, which wrapped a Wheego LiFe in Dali images.

"We can't compete with the General Motors of this world for Super Bowl ads," Nimphie said, "but we can answer questions and explain how EVs work. There are a lot of misconceptions out there, including range anxiety. We get people to look at how much they actually drive each day, and usually it's 15 to 25 miles — well within an EV's range."



Wheego now has 22 dealers, not all of them as energetic as Suncoast (left), and a half dozen more pending once it starts selling cars again. Suncoast is the most successful Wheego dealer, and has orders for a dozen LiFes to be delivered soon.

This isn't the way General Motors or Ford sell cars. It isn't going to get us to a million EVs by 2015, but it's a start. And, as the Journal points out, the starting gate is where we are.

THE OKLAHOMAN

Electric cars join Oklahoma City police fleet

by Juliana Keeping, May 16, 2012



Photo by Paul B. Southerland, The Oklahoman

The Wheego electric cars will be used by the parking enforcement unit in downtown Oklahoma City and the Bricktown neighborhood.

A small fleet of two-passenger electric cars has become the new mode of transport for the parking enforcement unit in Oklahoma City's downtown and in Bricktown.

Four Wheego electric cars went into service Wednesday, police Capt. Don Martin said. "The city has been looking for areas to introduce environmentally friendly resources," he said.

Along those lines, Police Chief Bill Citty looked for ways to implement environmentally friendly vehicles into the department's fleet, Martin said. The Wheego electric vehicles fit the bill. The four-wheel, front-wheel-drive cars are powered by a rechargeable battery pack. The vehicles and accompanying equipment cost between \$13,000 and \$14,000 each, Martin said. "It's still far less than the gas-powered vehicles we currently use," he said.

The vehicles also will be used for special events such as races and during Thunder games. They replaced older model, gas-powered, three-wheeled vehicles.



It's Electric! Boogie, Woogie, Woogie!

by Vicki Wheaton, April 20, 2012

Most of us have known nothing but cars that run on petrol. We pull up to the station, we fill up, we drive off. Every time the price of fuel increases we groan but we suffer it, because in the end we'd rather pay more than give up our vehicles.

Until recently there has been no end in sight, and basically everyone has been wondering if there is \$10 per gallon in our future. Maybe that's what the Mayans were barking on about.

Electric or hybrid cars have featured on television, and environmentally-conscious celebrities have put them in the news – tossing aside their four-wheeled behemoths in favour of nipper models that are cleaner and quieter. After years of debate and preparation, it looks as though the Cayman Islands are on the brink of registering electric cars, making them available to drive on local roads.

John Felder, chief executive officer of Cayman Automotive, has been spearheading the initiative and says he is glad to see his efforts finally being rewarded. He already has Wheego models in Grand Cayman, and has been featuring them at a number of events – particularly those revolving around eco-friendly products.

The installation of charging stations is also being planned at a number of familiar locations. There will initially be four active stations strategically placed about Grand Cayman, with a total of 14 appearing in the future.

Of course, people want to know what it is like to drive one of these cars, and how it differs from their gas-guzzlin', exhaust pipe-smokin' transports. How far will they have to stray from their comfort zone to go electric? I decided to take one for a test drive and get the inside track on the Wheego. They don't call me The Stig down here for nothing!

John decided he would ride in the passenger seat. I don't know if it was so he could give me information as we went, or so he could make sure I didn't crash his baby.

The first surprise was when I started the engine. There was no "vroom," no exhaust fumes ... no noise at all. It was honestly bizarre. I was being encouraged to put it in gear and start off, but I couldn't get over the quiet. Normally when my car sounds (or doesn't sound) like that, it means it's broken. With the Wheego the complete opposite is true.

We exited the property and I quickly began to get used to the way it handled. I should note that the Wheego is a two-seater with a lot of storage area in the back. I am not considered a small woman, but I found the seat accommodating and comfortable. There was ample head room and my long, model's legs (ahem) had easily enough space to manoeuvre.

The private road had a number of lumps and bumps and I hit the accelerator with gusto as we headed toward them. The smooth brakes allowed us to take tight corners without losing a couple of teeth and it had good suspension on the undulating tarmac and even a sizeable pothole that suddenly appeared out of nowhere ... I swear. Another important point to mention at this stage: the Wheego has passed rigorous safety tests and features driver and passenger-side air bags along with a high strength unibody steel frame.

Once I had taken us for a tour of the area, I turned for the journey back. John seemed relieved. I have to say that as we pulled back up to our starting position, I found myself quite impressed with the Wheego. It was nice to drive on that first test, and as the engine was so quiet, I could hear my beautiful speaking voice with brilliant clarity. Where could I sign up for one of these marvellous vehicles?

The Wheego can go for 100 miles on a fully charged battery, and you simply plug it into the wall as you would a rather large toaster. There will be charging stations at Governor's Square, Camana Bay, Kaibo and the Cayman Motor Museum which will actually power their station with solar panels. It can reach a maximum speed of 65 miles per hour which is all you need down here, and best of all, it costs a fraction of the price to power it.

It comes standard with air-conditioning which runs on a separate battery, so you don't have to choose between staying cool or getting to your destination. It also has a stereo which of course you will be able to enjoy all the more because you're not having to hear it over the sound of a petrol-driven engine. Most importantly, the Wheego comes in six exterior colours – White, Black, Red, Blue, Silver and Green (naturally.)

The Wheego is available for you to see at Cayman Automotive, and it will be on display at the Fashion in the Fast Lane event at the Cayman Motor Museum this Saturday evening. Expect to also encounter the fabulous AMP Mercedes ML in the coming months, and at the Expo in August, 2012.



ecoXplorer
travel green, drive green, save green

Excerpted from an article by Evelyn Kanter for [EcoXplorer](#), March 2012



Wheego was founded by an internet millionaire who decided to mate his software expertise to unibody construction. The Wheego FSV– the initials stand for full speed vehicle – has passed federal crash testing requirements, which means you can drive it on the interstate. The FSV has a 100-mile range and a top speed of 65mph. It is powered by lithium iron phosphate batteries, which are lighter weight and less expensive than the lithium ion cells that help power full hybrids such as the Toyota Prius and Mercedes-Benz S400 sedans. Although the chassis is made in China, 75% of the parts are made in the USA, and the vehicle is assembled in Ontario, California. Founder Mike McQuary told me recently his goal is to sell a 'couple of thousand' Wheegos. The FSV costs \$32,995 before tax credits

GTE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION TO GIVE AWAY WHEEGO LiFe EV FROM SUNCOAST ELECTRIC VEHICLES

St. Petersburg, FL (March 20, 2012) – Suncoast Electric Vehicles, Florida’s first all-electric car and truck dealer, has partnered with GTE Federal Credit Union to introduce even more drivers to the benefits of the emissions-free zone. GTE will be giving away one Wheego LiFe, an all-electric, highway-ready car capable of driving 100 miles on a single charge.

Through August 31, 2012, when customers close on a GTE Federal Credit Union home loan, they will automatically be entered to win the grand prize of a Wheego LiFe. Four finalists will be selected from all participants in September, and one winner will ultimately drive home their new electric Wheego LiFe at GTE’s member appreciation event, Memberfest, in October in Tampa, FL.



“Both GTE and Suncoast Electric Vehicles share a commitment to help consumers live environmentally responsible lives, and adding a zero-emission vehicle to the family fleet is certainly a major step in the right direction,” says Suncoast Electric Vehicles owner Richard Nimphie. “A new car is traditionally the second most important purchase after a new home, so we’re especially excited that one GTE Federal Credit Union home buyer will get both!”

The Wheego LiFe travels approximately 100 miles on a single charge and retails for \$32,995. It qualifies for a

\$7,500 Federal tax credit, as well as many state tax incentives. In Florida, for example, the LiFe will save commuters both money at the pump and time on the road: it can be driven by a solo driver in the HOV lane.

The two-seat subcompact Wheego LiFe comes fully-equipped with driver and passenger airbags, anti-lock brakes, power windows and locks, and optional air conditioning. The 115V lithium battery pack can be charged from a standard 120V outlet, a 240V outlet or any of the J1772 standard charging stations being installed in public locations throughout the United States. It is available in red, white, blue, black, silver, or green.

“We applaud GTE for choosing both Suncoast Electric Vehicles and Wheego for this promotion,” said Susan Nicholson, VP of Corporate Communications for Wheego Electric Cars. “Suncoast has been a tireless advocate for educating consumers about the short- and long-term benefits of electric vehicles, and we’re delighted that GTE is sharing that message with their home buyers and members.”

For more information on how win the Wheego LiFe and for complete contest rules, please visit <https://www.gtefcu.org/Promotions/ElectricCar.aspx>.

About Wheego Electric Cars

Wheego Electric Cars is an innovation-driven and environmentally-conscious manufacturer of Electric Vehicles (EVs). Under the leadership of Mike McQuary, CEO and former MindSpring entrepreneur, Wheego Electric Cars has become a leader in the integration of advanced technology components. Wheego Electric Cars is one of the first EV companies to deliver affordable fully capable, street legal all-electric cars for everyday consumer use. The Wheego line of electric vehicles is emission-free, making them an ideal choice for consumers, fleets and businesses who want to reduce their carbon footprint. Wheego is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. The cars are assembled in Ontario, California. For more information about Wheego, visit the company website at www.wheego.net.

Slow and steady: The Wheego tortoise may win the race

Excerpted from an article by Jim Motavalli, March 13, 2012

Lots of other electric car companies are flashier, but this China/California hybrid has a hyper-cautious strategy that makes sense as the electric vehicle market gets off to a slow start.



Following the demise of Aptera and Bright Automotive, it's time to give a good hard look at Wheego Electric Cars. It's Wheego, definitely the tiniest and least well-capitalized of the three, that's still ticking — and a big reason for that is its small-is-beautiful philosophy.

Wheego, based in Atlanta, makes the two-passenger LiFe, a Smart-sized car sourced from China, with electric drive train and batteries installed in California. That's the same basic formula as the much higher-profile Coda, but the latter went through a number of delays and has yet to get a car on the road.

The LiFe, which I've driven in California and Atlanta, isn't going to blow anybody away with performance or high-tech add-ons. Its 30-kilowatt-hour lithium battery pack is coupled to a 60-horsepower electric motor. Top speed is 65 mph, and you get there eventually. The air-conditioning is optional. It's a commuter car, priced at \$32,995.

Wheego is on the market, though not in a big way: The company has built precisely 36 cars since the first one rolled out for Earth Day 2011, and has sold something like 34 of them, says Mike McQuary (right), the ex-Internet entrepreneur and music business maven who heads the company. "Our dealers [I count 27, from Tokyo to Arundel, Maine] are clamoring for cars," he told me. "Three quarters of our dealers have never had a car, but they're being very patient with our strategy." And that strategy has been to build cars only when it gets the money — whether through venture capital or selling out its inventory.



The market for two-seat cars is pretty limited, but Wheego is planning to add a crossover vehicle chosen from among three contending Chinese manufacturers. It won't appear tomorrow — getting the new car through crash testing will probably take two years.

I gotta say that Wheego is playing it smart, given that the market is moving slowly anyway. The company has precisely 7.5 employees (including McQuary), up from five the last time I asked. Both Aptera and Bright expended a lot of resources reaching for the brass ring — Department of Energy Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing(ATVM) funding. The

Department of Energy manages a pot of \$25 billion and has spent only \$8 billion of it (Tesla and Fisker were both recipients, with more than \$500 million each).

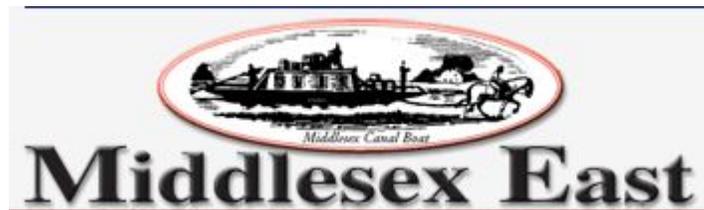
It's really tempting to go after that money, but in the wake of Solyndra and in an election year, the DOE is playing it super-careful. It just turned down long-term contender Carbon Motors (which wanted \$310 million to build green police cars), and has committed only \$50 million in funding since its big commitment to Fisker in 2009.

Wheego's problem with the DOE was, again, thinking too small. "We initially sought DOE funding, but the feedback was that we needed to be more oriented towards job development," McQuary said. "But our ambition was never to create a full-on assembly plan that involved forging meta. We think we have a viable business plan for building electric cars, but it really doesn't create a lot of jobs. So the DOE came back to us and asked us if we wanted to rewrite the plan to make it more aggressive in terms of job creation. But we opted instead to keep our integrity — we didn't want to be disingenuous on our application. And, frankly, we've always had just enough funding to get to the next stage. Not getting the loan has made us a tougher company, and very smart at how we deploy capital."

Wheego is a tortoise, but the hares aren't faring so well. "I see us as a company that creeps out instead of leaping out," McQuary said. And 36 cars is definitely creeping out. Michael Brylawski, a vice president at the lamented Bright (which made a really useful plug-in hybrid cargo van), told me that the ATVM process distorted the market for private capital. If you didn't get a DOE loan, he said, the markets looked askance at your prospects.

McQuary agrees. "Companies like Tesla and Fisker, which got the loans, have been better able to raise follow-up capital," he said. "But at this point I'm hoping all the companies succeed, because a rising tide will lift up all our boats. I'm rooting for Coda to get its car on the road, and I'm rooting for Tesla's Model S, too."

More flush times could be ahead for Wheego. McQuary told me he closed a deal with a major investor last week. "When people learn who it is, it will really increase market confidence in us," he said. The company has prospects, and a more diverse product line in the wings.



'Wheego' to Reading to see new electric car dealership

excerpted from an article by Paul Feely, January 31, 2012



Dan Enxing (right) and John Zaeder of Ecars in Reading have recently opened the first electric car franchise in New England. The duo stands next to the Wheego electric car. Photo by HomeNewsNow

Reading's high school colors may be red and black, but one new business on Main Street is adding another color to the mix – green.

Dan Enxing, President of Subaru of Nashua, New Hampshire and co-founder with John Zaeder of Go Green Realty Trust in Hudson, New Hampshire, has opened an ECars of New England dealership at 281 Main Street in Reading, the former site of the Artists Frame Shop.

Zaeder and Enxing are looking to ride what they hope will be a growing wave of support for electric cars, in both sales and usage throughout the region.

"It is the first new electric car franchise in New England," said Enxing. Enxing became interested in the site after learning about it online. "I was looking for suitable locations one day, and I came across this site," said Enxing. "It seemed like there were some environmental challenges with it, and it seemed like a great fit." The dealership, located on a 36,340 square foot lot, specializes in sales of Wheego Whip cars, though hybrid cars from other companies are also sold there.

The Wheego Whip LiFe Full-Speed all-electric car recently became available for purchase. The Whip LiFe runs on a lithium battery pack, and will go approximately 100 miles on a charge. The sticker price on the Wheego Whip LiFe is targeted in the low \$30K's.

“That’s the highway version of the Wheego,” said Enxing. “There’s another version, meant for around town or city driving, that gets slightly less mileage per charge.”

With gas prices on the rise at the pumps again weekly, Enxing couldn’t be more excited about the future of the electric car industry.

“The price of oil is going to take off this spring,” said Enxing. “These are great cars. They look great, they have a lot of room inside – a tall man can fit inside comfortably. We have a lot of confidence in this. It will be the first new electric car franchise in New England, and we are excited.”

Wheego Electric Cars distinguishes itself from other electric vehicles currently on the market with its long running dry cell sealed (AGM) batteries, which require no maintenance and will not harm the environment.

Its vehicles feature on-board high tech chargers and battery systems can allow travel up to 50 miles on a single charge – and plug in for a recharge on any standard home 120 volt electrical outlet.

Electric cars – What’s the fuss all about? An electric car is powered by an electric motor instead of a gasoline engine. The electric motor gets energy from a controller, which regulates the amount of power—based on the driver’s use of an accelerator pedal. The electric car (also known as electric vehicle or EV) uses energy stored in its rechargeable batteries, which are recharged by common household electricity. Unlike a hybrid car—which is fueled by gasoline and uses a battery and motor to improve efficiency—an electric car is powered exclusively by electricity. Historically, EVs have not been widely adopted because of limited driving range before needing to be recharged, long recharging times, and a lack of commitment by automakers to produce and market electric cars that have all the creature comforts of gas-powered cars. That’s changing. As battery technology improves—simultaneously increasing energy storage and reducing cost—major automakers are expected to begin introducing a new generation of electric cars.

The recent years have seen a remarkable activity in the global electric vehicle industry. Growing environmental concerns and an increase in oil prices in 2007-2008 provided manufacturers as well as consumers with ample thrust to accelerate the transition towards electric vehicles (EVs). Several major as well as small manufacturers ventured into the manufacture of electric vehicles, while a few others announced plans for the same. Technological breakthroughs have expanded the scope of electric vehicles considerably. These developments are expected to result in widespread acceptance of electric vehicles across mass markets.

The US presently constitutes the largest regional market for electric vehicles, accounting for more than 50% of the global market, as reported by the new market research report on Electric Vehicles. Nevertheless, growth is expected to emanate mainly from Asia-Pacific, with countries such as China and Japan setting aggressive production and sales goals. Sales of electric vehicles in Japan are projected to reach 433,000 units by 2012.

Fla. dealer bets EVs will go far



Ana Maria and Richard Nimphie show off a Wheego Whip. Says Richard: "I took a calculated risk that this time EVs were going to be a thing of the future, not just a passing notion."

Excerpted from an article by Alysha Webb, January 9, 2012

After his two Lexus dealerships in Florida were sold to AutoNation in 1997, Richard Nimphie stayed for nine years to run them. But he wanted his own business, and one idea kept jumping out at him -- electric vehicles. A year ago, Nimphie opened Suncoast Electric Vehicles in St. Petersburg, Fla.

"I took a calculated risk that this time EVs were going to be a thing of the future, not just a passing notion," he says.

The business model is risky. Suncoast is not tied to an established automaker -- instead, it buys EVs from several small producers -- and its product portfolio is tiny.

But it fills a need for new companies that lack retail networks. And because it isn't a franchised dealer, it can sell over a vast area. Still, some experts are wary of its chances for success.

Suncoast offers a handful of EVs: the Wheego Whip low-speed vehicle, the Wheego LiFe, two Vantage commercial vehicles, a golf cart, and electric scooters and bikes. Prices range from \$799 for an electric bike to \$32,995 for a Wheego LiFe.

In its first year, Suncoast took deposits for 10 Wheego LiFe units and sold four Vantages and "a lot of electric bikes," Nimphie says.

The store's future probably will parallel the fortunes of electric-drive vehicles, experts say.

"He is selling electric mobility," says Rebecca Lindland, director of research at IHS Automotive. "There is an opportunity because of the changes we are starting to see."



A St. Petersburg, Fla., beauty salon owner uses a Wheego Whip from Suncoast Electric Vehicles to promote her business.

President Obama's plan to have 1 million alternative-fuel vehicles on the road by 2015 should expand the market for EVs, she says, as could a more environmentally aware younger generation.

Still, the EVs-only business model is a long shot, says Lloyd Schiller, a dealership consultant in West Palm Beach, Fla.

"I would have a hard time making a business case for this," he says. "Right now, Nissan and Mitsubishi are trying to sell EVs out of traditional dealerships, but I doubt any of their dealers could survive on Leafs and i-MiEVs alone."

On the other hand, Suncoast can range far afield to find customers. The store has sold several Vantage vans to the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center in Petaluma, Calif., and is talking with several universities, Nimphie says.

Individual buyers in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area include college students, retirees and small-business owners who want to project a green image. One local beauty salon owner wrapped her red Wheego Whip with her shop's name. "It is kind of an eye-catcher," Nimphie says.

Suncoast partners with a local credit union for financing, and sells service contracts, Nimphie says. He takes gasoline-powered cars as trade-in vehicles, reselling the fuel-efficient models and wholesaling the rest. For spare parts, Suncoast has an arrangement with the manufacturers, Nimphie says. He offers a mobile repair service for buyers in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area. "That alone sets their mind at ease and puts more credence into EVs," he says.

Nimphie, 62, went to work for a fleet leasing company straight out of college in 1971. His father-in-law at the time, the late George Ballas, who owned Chrysler and Buick dealerships in Toledo, Ohio, was one of the first Chrysler leasing franchisees in the 1960s. He advised Nimphie to work in the leasing business.



Suncoast Electric Vehicles owner Richard Nimphie figures being an EV-only dealer will give him first shot at new products from EV companies looking to enter the market.

Three years later, the two formed a leasing business, George Ballas Leasing Inc., that grew to seven offices nationwide. Nimphie left Toledo in the early '90s to become operating partner at Lexus of Tampa Bay and Lexus of Clearwater, both in Florida.

After leaving the Lexus dealerships, Nimphie started Lease South LLC in St. Petersburg with his son, Jonathan. The business leases vehicles and other products, such as computers and medical and construction equipment.

Now Jonathan, 30, works at the EV dealership, as does Richard Nimphie's wife, Ana Maria. "All we do is think about EVs and study them," Richard Nimphie says.

Nimphie, who drives a Wheego Whip as his main car (the family also has a Lexus RX 450h hybrid), is not worried about the store's future. Suncoast didn't make any money its first year, but he didn't expect it to, says Nimphie, who is the sole investor.

He is talking to other EV manufacturers about adding products to his lineup. Nimphie figures being an EV-only dealer will give him first shot at new products from EV companies looking to enter the market. Says Nimphie: "I can't even fathom what we will sell in five years in terms of power, range and capability."

The New York Times

To the Caribbean, by All Means

by Elaine Glusac, November 28, 2011

By air, sea and auto, travelers have new ways to reach and roam the Caribbean this season.



This month American Airlines began nonstop flights to Antigua from Kennedy Airport. Also this month JetBlue began departures to La Romana in the Dominican Republic (Altos de Chavon amphitheater, right) from Kennedy, and starting Dec. 15 will fly to St. Thomas from Logan Airport in Boston. From San Juan, JetBlue will also offer connecting service to St. Thomas and St. Croix beginning Dec. 12.

In the French Caribbean, Jeans ferry started last month, connecting Guadeloupe to Les Saintes, Martinique, Marie-Galante and Dominica, from 25 to 70 euros (\$33 to \$54) round trip.

On Grand Cayman, a new solar-powered station for electric vehicles recently made its debut, with 11 more to be installed across the Cayman Islands in 2012. By next month, visitors will be able to rent electric Wheego cars from Andy's Car Rental. Pricing is still to be determined, but recharges will be free.

Charged Up About Electric Cars

by Carley Thornell, November 13, 2011

The move to sell electric cars was natural for Dan Enxing, who's been plugged into the automotive industry for 25 years.

Now he and co-owner John Zaeder are set for a December soft opening of their first freestanding eCars of New England dealership.



AWAY WHEEGO: ECars co-owners John Zaeder, left, and Dan Enxing show off an electric Wheego 'LiFE' model in their Reading showroom, which will open next month. Photo by Patrick Whittemore

Enxing and Zaeder are transforming a Reading building blighted by petroleum contaminants into a sparkling new space where they'll sell fuel-efficient used cars and serve as the state's only authorized dealer for the two-seat electric cars made by Wheego.

"The first question everybody seems to ask me is, 'Do you feel safe driving it?' Absolutely," said Zaeder, referring to the Wheego. "All you need to do is sit down in one. It has a steel-reinforced frame and weighs almost 3,000 pounds, though it's small in size."

Both the Whip, a 35 mph commuter option, and the 70 mph LiFE have the same body style. The former has a 40- to 50-mile travel range before it has to be recharged for eight hours, and the LiFE has a 100-mile range and an eight- to 12-hour charging time, depending upon voltage.

Wheegos' flexibility in using both 110-volt and 220-volt chargers, their longer range and lower price points compared to other manufacturers' electric options make them more attractive, said Zaeder. They retail for \$19,000 and \$32,000 respectively and each has federal tax incentives, but Zaeder touts other advantages, too.

“There’s no tune-ups, there’s no oil changes, none of that maintenance,” he said. “It’s about 3 cents per mile to operate so it’s one-tenth the cost of riding a traditional car.”

There will be plenty of fuel-efficient used models such as the Honda Civic and Toyota Prius hybrids alongside free charging stations at the Reading lot.

Spots to juice up electrics are often a challenge to find, but Zaeder and Enxing, family friends and Andover residents, are working with their town and Reading to install more.

Enxing also plans to offer Tesla’s new four-door electric sedan, a sleek and sporty model retailing for \$60,000 that could go a long way to changing people’s perceptions of the electric car. In addition to eCars, he owns Hudson, N.H.-based Subaru of Nashua.

Zaeder said some drivers are attracted to the Wheego because most of its parts, excluding the chassis which is built in China, are made in America and the car is assembled in California. The Atlanta-based company was started by Mike McQuary, the brains behind Internet access provider MindSpring.com. ECars is set to be fully operational by New Year’s.



Patrol volunteers watch out for and assist visitors

by Steven James, October 2011



Ambassador on patrol - STEVEN JAMES/JENKS JOURNAL Jan Skinner shows off one of the Jenks Courtesy Patrol's two electric cars. Skinner is one of several volunteers who patrol parking lots at the Oklahoma Aquarium and RiverWalk Crossing to prevent auto burglaries as well as help visitors find dining and shopping opportunities across Jenks.

What started out as a way to combat auto burglaries at the Oklahoma Aquarium and RiverWalk Crossing is becoming a tool to help better acquaint visitors with Jenks.

You may have seen the little Wheego Whip electric cars marked “Jenks Courtesy Patrol” patrolling the parking lots at the two locations or driving through town.

The patrol is a joint venture between the city and the Oklahoma Aquarium. Its cars are driven by volunteers who not only watch out for parking-lot burglars, but also act as ambassadors for the city, answering questions about local dining and shopping opportunities and giving directions. “Our goal is to help the city of Jenks security-wise but also to just get the word out that we care, we care about you, we want you to have a great time and we want you to have a safe time while you’re here,” said Phil Tate, production and technology manager for the aquarium and courtesy patrol supervisor.

“We want everybody to know what is in the city of Jenks.”

Chris Shroul, an intern for the city who helped get the project going, said the city purchased the two patrol cars last summer for \$30,000 — nearly \$17,000 of which was funded by a Tulsa Clean Cities alternative-fuel vehicle grant. The patrol could have used a couple of former police cars, but opted to purchase the Whips due to the high mileage on the police cars and the “friendlier” look of the two-passenger electric cars, Shroul said.

Interview: LiFe Powered by the Sun

by Preston, October 7, 2011



Carolyn and Kyle Cave, both university professors in Hadley, Massachusetts, built this super-insulated home to minimize energy consumption. Then they dropped a 20kW solar PV array on the roof and now use energy from the sun to generate a surplus that also powers this tiny little Wheego LiFe electric vehicle. I was able to ask Carolyn Cave a few questions about their solar-powered situation, and this is a portion of that response:

Q: What's it like living in a high-performance home with solar power and an EV?

Carolyn: I guess the primary ways that life has changed are somewhat intangible. We are enjoying a new, highly efficient home that has dramatically reduced our carbon footprint. It feels good to know that our contribution to greenhouse gases is now very much less than it was before. We are sending excess power onto the grid that is generated by our solar panels. So our neighbors can also use power that is being generated without the use of fossil fuels.

The Wheego is very much a part of the whole package. We planned the size of our solar array to allow for sufficient energy generation to power both our house and our car (net), so we were very interested to obtain an electric car as soon as possible. The vast majority of our driving is now in the electric car, so most of our energy use is happening without burning fossil fuels. That is very satisfying.

The level of interest in our home and car from both our friends and others has been fun and encouraging. It has been fun to share the bits of knowledge that we have accumulated with others. Driving an electric car has generated a lot of interest. People stop to ask us about the car and to give us positive feedback. I got the thumbs up from a Prius driver the other day!

Q: Would you encourage someone else to do the same?

Carolyn: We would absolutely encourage others to do the same. One of the reasons we started the project in the first place was as a sort of demonstration project to show that it is possible to fuel a nice lifestyle with minimal use of fossil fuels. Investments of time (to learn) and money are generally needed, but knowledgeable people who are interested in addressing climate change are generally generous with their time and expertise to help and there are ways to build and/or retrofit without huge monetary investments. There are also beginning to be agencies that can help with these investments.

Q: Can you tell me anything about the investment you've made or the payback?

Carolyn: We do think that this is a good investment. Our primary motivation was to invest our resources in doing the right thing for the planet. Still, we think it is a good investment in other ways as well. There are significant federal tax credits for both our purchase of solar panels and our electric car, which will reduce our costs over time.

We are also fortunate to live in a state, Massachusetts, that has also set up good incentives for individuals to invest in renewable energy. Our utility is required to give us credit that is nearly equal to the cost we would pay for electricity. All of the electricity we generate is also producing solar renewable energy credits (SRECs) that are sold to utilities in a market. These SRECs also help to offset our initial investment. //

Wheego, a manufacturer of all-electric vehicles, first started delivering LiFe EVs to purchasers on Earth Day this year. The car retails for about \$33,000, but the purchase is a little more palatable with a \$7,500 tax credit. Most recently, in August, the company unveiled a fuel savings calculator to compare the cost of Wheego LiFe versus a regular gasoline-powered car.

All-electric Wheego LiFe hits Seattle streets

by Scott Gutierrez, August 20, 2011



Photos by J. Trujillo, SeattlePI

I recently had the chance to start a new LiFe. The all-electric Wheego LiFe, that is.

It's the latest electric vehicle to enter the Seattle market, following last year's fanfare over the Nissan Leaf and partly-electric Chevy Volt.

The Wheego LiFe was introduced this month at MC Electric Vehicles, a small dealership in at 1201 Dearborn Street in the International District. Jim Johnson, the owner, invited seattlepi.com to take the LiFe for a spin.

The LiFe is an ultra-compact two-door that zips along on the power of a 115-volt Lithium-ion battery pack. It looks like a hatchback that shrunk in the wash (it does rain a lot here). Slightly larger than a smart car, it feels surprisingly roomy and sturdy from behind the wheel. If you're

the size of an NBA power forward, it might be tough to squeeze in. But at 5 feet 11, I felt comfortable.



There's room in back to haul groceries, or boxes, or your dog. The LiFe seems like an ideal car for trips around town. With a maximum speed of 65 mph, it's Wheego's first highway-ready vehicle. It has a listed maximum range of 100 miles on a single charge, although Johnson says it probably could reach 120 miles under the right circumstances.

We took it for a jaunt up and around First Hill and down to Interstate 5, but didn't get to let it stretch due to heavy traffic on the freeway. But when I hit the gas to head up hills, there was no hesitation in climbing.

Like other electric models, the car runs silently. After turning the ignition, it was tough to tell if the car was running.

It sells at a base price \$32,995, about \$200 more than the Leaf. Some might ask why would it be worth purchasing a smaller car for a higher price. (We took the Leaf for a test drive last year). "First of all, it has 30,000 watts of

power versus 23,000 watts of power," Johnson said.

"Probably the biggest difference is the Leaf is about 800 pounds heavier. As a result, we've got more range and acceleration."

The LiFe feels bit sportier and would make it easier to find parking downtown.

With the LiFe, you might not have to worry about installing a charging station in your home. The car comes with a Clipper Creek charging pack that can be plugged into a standard 110-volt garage outlet. It also can plug into a 220-volt outlet and has a connection for any J1772 public charging station, Johnson said.

"I treat it just like a cell phone. I'm in the habit of plugging in the phone at night and plugging in the car at night," he said.



Recharging an empty battery with the 110-volt plug could take 8 to 10 hours. With a Level 2 240-volt plug-in, it takes about five hours.

The LiFe, like other electric vehicles, qualifies for a state sales tax exemption and a federal \$7,500 tax credit. It comes with driver and passenger airbags, anti-lock brakes, and power windows. Air conditioning is an option for an extra \$1,995.

To compare the costs of fueling a LiFe versus a gas-powered car, Wheego's website provides this calculator.

The vehicle is manufactured in Ontario, Calif. Wheego, headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., also has the Whip, a medium speed electric car that looks like the LiFe but is designed strictly for neighborhood and city-street travel.

Johnson started his dealership 30 years ago selling construction equipment. After the oil embargo in the 1970s, he felt inspired to get into business that helps the environment. He jumped into the market for plug-in vehicles, with his dealership focused solely on plug-in vehicles since 2003.



As more electric vehicles enter the market, city and state leaders are trying to build out a network of fast-charging public stations where drivers can top off if needed. In addition to the EV project, Seattle received a \$500,000 federal grant to install 50 charging stations on city properties.

For about 10 years, Johnson commuted from his Alki-area home in smaller electric vehicles like the ZENN (Zero Emission No Noise) with a 35-mile top range.

"For a lot of applications, that's all people need," he said.

Some customers use the smaller-class electric vehicles their in-city drives, while keeping a fossil-fueled car for longer road trips, he said.

"I hadn't bought gas in so long and then I did buy a gallon last year for a mower to mow a church lawn where I volunteer. The smell was so strong, it almost knocked me over," he said.



Wheego Participates in South Bay Cities Council of Governments LSV Test

from [South Bay Cities](#), August 2011

LOCAL USE VEHICLE PROJECT



The South Bay Cities Council of Governments (SBCCOG) has a grant from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) to demonstrate how Local Use Vehicles (LUV) can be used to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and gasoline consumption.

*The preliminary report on the demonstration project is now available. [Click here](#) for your copy of *Neighborhood Electric Vehicles in Mature Suburbs: Demonstration and Preliminary Evaluation*.*



New York's First Wheego LiFe Car

by Lindsay Nielsen for WBNG TV, Binghamton, New York – June 30, 2011



As gas prices remain higher, people looking for new cars have new options.

A local dealership is the first in New York to have the Wheego Life electric car.

This Wheego Life electric car is the first one in New York State. "It has a re-generator breaking system and it's designed that when you're breaking, going down long hills some of the energy from the break is captured and its sent back into the battery," says Co-Owner of Pritchard Automotive, Dan Pritchard.

Pritchard Automotive in Ithaca has a low speed and high speed model. The high speed model can travel up to 65 mph and a longer distance.

"Around one hundred miles on a charge more in perfect conditions, less if you're running the air conditioner, the heater, going up hills," says Pritchard.

The Wheego Life takes anywhere from five to eight hours to charge but could still save you money and it's cheaper than paying for gas.

"It's right around two to three cents a mile as opposed to a gas car which I've seen eighteen cents a mile depending on the price of gas," says Pritchard.

The low speed sells for around \$20,000 while the high speed is priced around \$34,000 dollars. Pritchard Automotive has not sold one yet, but it has people intrigued.

"I think municipalities who do all kinds of city miles and everything would be really wise. As a tax payer I would love to see more municipalities invest in these and cut down on gas," says Steve Lawrence of West Danby.

"There's actually a lot of room in it even though its so small, it seems like there's a lot of room for sitting and storage," says Allison Miettunen of Ithaca.

The car can be charged with a regular household outlet or a specially purchased one to cut down on charge time. Pritchard says if charging stations become more available it could be the car of the future. The Wheego Life qualifies for a 7,500 dollar federal tax credit as well as many state tax incentives. The car is available in six different colors.

Electric Car Offered in Salem

by Thelma Guerrero-Huston for the Salem, Oregon [Statesman Journal](#), June 22, 2011

O'Brien Auto Group in Salem is plugged into the electric car market. The dealership has received the first and only Wheego fully electric car in Oregon.

The auto group is one of three dealerships on the West Coast that will sell the Wheego LiFe, said Branton Plaster, customer service manager at O'Brien.

"I was expecting it to look like a golf cart, but it doesn't look anything like that," Plaster said. "It's not made of fiberglass, and it has all the amenities of a luxury car."

The new Wheego LiFe joins the Zap car, Nissan Leaf and other electric cars in Salem and Oregon.

According to the manufacturer, Atlanta-based Wheego Electric Cars, the subcompact two-seater carries a \$32,995 sticker price and is eligible for a \$7,500 federal tax credit.

Under current Oregon law, residents who purchase a LiFe would qualify for a \$1,500 tax credit and as much as a \$750 tax credit if they were to install a charging station on their property. But that could change if a bill making its way through the state Legislature is approved, said Diana Enright, a spokeswoman with the Oregon Department of Energy.

If the bill were to become law, "the tax credits would sunset on Dec. 31, 2011," Enright said. Mike McQuary, the chief executive officer of Wheego Electric Cars, said the company was excited to have O'Brien Auto Group represent Wheego across the state.

"We think that Oregon might lead all states in electric vehicle adoption," he said, "and we're happy to team up with an organization that is a clear leader for sales and service in the state." The LiFe car comes equipped with driver and passenger airbags, anti-lock brakes and power windows and locks. Air conditioning is optional.

The Wheego LiFe operates on a 115-volt lithium battery pack that can be charged through a standard 120-volt outlet, a 240-volt outlet or J1772 standard charging stations. Buyers can choose from colors that include red, white, blue, black, silver and green. The car is on sale now.

The auto group has taken orders for six months, Plaster said. The dealership will receive one more LiFe in the next month or two. Both will be showcased at the Oregon State Fair. O'Brien Auto Group plans to install two charging stations on its property "so that people can come in, park the car and charge it," Plaster said.

Tampa Bay Times

My First (Electric) Car: '11 Wheego Whip LiFe Whip LiFe, Niela Eliason, St. Petersburg



by Niela Eliason for the [St. Petersburg Times](#), June 7, 2011
'11 Wheego Whip LiFe

I got an electric car! It's called a Wheego. I won't have to buy any gas. It is peppy and can go 70 miles an hour, but with no roaring sound. I plug it in to be recharged when I get back to the garage. We had to have a special power outlet installed for the house. It can go up to 100 miles (on one charge), but I don't drive 100 miles a day. I just make short trips to the grocery store, to the library, to the swimming pool. Once in a while, I go to Tampa, but even that isn't 100 miles back and forth. The Wheego has two front seats and room in the back for groceries. It is air conditioned and has power brakes. The price was \$38,728 (including sales tax), but it qualifies for a tax credit of \$7,500, so it cost considerably less. And think of the money you save on gas with gas prices at almost \$4 a gallon. I bought my car at [Suncoast Electric Vehicles](#) in St. Petersburg. Mine was the first one sold along the gulf coast of Florida. You can drive by and see the vehicles sitting out front. My car is dark blue, but the cars also come in other colors: pale blue, red, white, black and dark green. It's very elegant and comfortable inside.



Holland electric vehicle dealer selling smaller alternative to Nissan Leaf, Chevy Volt

Excerpted from an article by Myron Kukla for the Michigan Live [Grand Rapids Press](#), June 7, 2011



Photo by Cory Olsen, Grand Rapids Press

HOLLAND, MI — Back in 1999 when he started Lakeshore Custom Golf Carts, Bob Hahn sold nothing but golf carts for recreation and vacation use.

Today, his Lakeshore Electric Cars dealership is a pioneer — selling street-legal electric vehicles, including the new highway-ready Wheego electric car.

“I haven’t sold a golf cart in years, ever since the state banned them from roadways,” he said. “Since 2006, all I sell are electric vehicles.”

Hahn carries street-legal low-speed vehicles like the 25 mph electric Tomberlin and the new Wheego LiFe electric car, a Smart-car like adaptation of a Chinese-made vehicle able to travel at a top speed of 65 mph and go 100 miles on a charge.

“I’m now the Michigan dealer for Wheegos, border to border,” he said.

The California car company delivered its first 2011 Wheego LiFe on Earth Day in Atlanta and is slowly gearing up production and rolling the car out to dealers like Hahn over the next few months.

“We’re starting out slowly, producing fewer than 100 a month to make sure we do it right,” said Susan Nicholson, Wheego’s vice president of corporate communications.

She said the company is still getting out showroom models to its 30 U.S. dealers and plans to ramp up car production in the fall.

“We’ve had a lot of interest but no sales yet,” said Hahn, who is using a factory demo Wheego at his dealership at 432 Waverly Road while he waits for delivery. “We’re still waiting to get cars to sell. I’m scheduled to get my first one in July.”

At \$34,000 to \$36,000, the Wheego’s price is on par with that of the larger all-electric Nissan Leaf but less than the more heavily publicized Chevrolet Volt’s \$41,000 starting price. All qualify for a federal income tax credit of up to \$7,500 for electric vehicle purchases.

While the Leaf seats five and the Volt four, the tiny Wheego has a roomy front cabin for two and small cargo space in the rear.

“The Wheego is a pretty sharp electric car for commuting — just plug it in every night and go,” said Hahn.

The car comes with all the standard car features, including power locks and windows, ABS breaks, electric mirrors, heater and air conditioning and an electric motor capable of 60 horsepower. The car chassis is manufactured in China with 73 percent of the component assembly done in Ontario, Calif.

“It will charge in six to eight hours on 110 power or four to six hours with 220 receptor,” said Hahn, noting there are about five public electric charging stations in Holland.

Wheego claims the car can go about 100 miles per charge, similar to the Leaf. Like the Leaf, the Wheego has no Volt-like gasoline backup power supply. When it runs out of juice, it must be plugged back in before going farther.



Higher Gas Prices Giving More Go to the Wheego

by Randy Southerland, May 27, 2011

It was while watching “Who Killed the Electric Car?” — the documentary on GM’s ill-fated efforts to market its first electric car in the early 1990s — that **Mike McQuary** saw the outlines of a new business.

Early owners of the EV1 were so passionate about the cars that they literally fought to keep them when GM wanted to take them away.

“They were early tech adopters and had a strong emotional attachment to their cars and that really rang a bell for me,” said McQuary, who co-founded Internet pioneer MindSpring and is now CEO of startup Wheego Electric Cars.

The company launched its first short-range, low-powered Whip two-seater in 2009 for intown and street driving under 35 miles per hour. This year it debuted a highway vehicle, the larger and more refined LiFe. The two-seater is just over 9 feet long with a range of about 100 miles. It can be recharged overnight using a regular outlet, but charging times can be reduced by installing a charging station. Wheego offers all the features of a conventional auto from power steering and door locks to a high-end stereo system. The LiFe retails for just under \$33,000, but qualifies for a \$7,500 federal tax break for alternative fuel vehicles, along with an additional \$5,000 state tax break. Gas prices at the \$4 a gallon level should also help push buyers to choose electric — especially for a second car, said McQuary.

The first production run will be small — about 100 cars in the next year. Jim Ellis, the only dealer in Atlanta, has sold only a handful to buyers who signed up on a waiting list. The car is not the only electric vehicle in its showrooms.

“Not that gas vehicles will become dinosaurs at this stage,” said General Manager Stacey Hodges. “It’s just an offering for those who want to make a move in that direction.” To keep costs low, Wheego outsourced development and production with chassis construction in China and assembly in a plant in Ontario, Calif.

“That happens to be where the chief engineer for our drivetrain is,” said Les Seagraves, Wheego’s vice president for marketing. To help ramp up an expected increase in demand, the company is seeking a \$15 million cash infusion from investors, McQuary said.



THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

Up close: 'Taking care of the customers' is key

By Michael E. Kanell, May 16, 2011

The price of gasoline was rising as the first Wheegos rolled out this spring. Not that higher prices were going to touch off a surge of buyers for the all-electric vehicle — changing cars isn't like switching radio stations. Besides, the Atlanta-based company isn't building the cars all that fast anyhow. Wheego Electric Cars is planning a long ramp-up to rapid production with a parallel climb in consumer acceptance. But higher pump prices sure help.

"When gas is \$3 a gallon, there's interest in electric vehicles," said CEO Mike McQuary. "When gas is \$4 a gallon, there is extreme interest. I think \$4 is definitely the tipping point. And I don't think we'll see \$3 a gallon again." McQuary, who co-wrote the business plan for MindSpring Enterprises, came to Atlanta to help run that idiosyncratic Internet upstart. On his watch, the customer base went from about a thousand to 5 million after merging with EarthLink. A couple of years later, McQuary left. He started Brash Music, an independent record label, and, with several other entrepreneurs, formed a private equity investment and consulting firm. The road to Wheego started when he saw the documentary "Who Killed the Electric Car?" He was struck by the interviews with people who had been briefly allowed to lease electric vehicles — and loved them.

"The only other time I heard voices like that was when I worked in MindSpring," he said. "It rang a bell in my head. Because if you treat customers well, if you make them part of what you do, they will be almost evangelical in spreading word about that vehicle."

Wheego is still in its infancy. Today marks just a month since the official launch. The number of full-time corporate employees can be counted on your fingers. The number of cars coming off the California assembly line in a week might not fill a restaurant parking lot. The only dealership in metro Atlanta selling Wheegos is Jim Ellis.

Among the other electric vehicles on the market are the Nissan Leaf, which lists for the same price as the Wheego but with a global company's backing; and the Tesla, a flashier car costing more than three times as much. When McQuary talks about Wheego's plans, he sometimes scoffs at the companies that annually sell millions of vehicles. He delights in hiring ex-MindSpring staffers whose main experience was in providing Internet service. He talks glowingly about the customer-centric approach of Apple Computer. And he plans to change the automotive world.

Q: How much trouble has it been to raise money?

A: When I left MindSpring, I must have had 50 people shake my hand and tell me, 'The next time that you find a MindSpring, tell me so I can invest in it,' and here, I've got it. But when I go to investment conferences, everybody sits with their hands folded. They have this chance, and they are passing on it.

Because of all of that that has happened [in the economy], when it comes to the investment community, people are much more cautious. The ability to raise significant money in Atlanta is really, really tough.

Q: So, do you have enough money?

A: I have had enough to do exactly what needed to be done, just not what I wanted.

Q: Do you drive the Wheego at home?

A: Sometimes. But it's for two people. With four kids, a minivan is the way to haul family around. Look, gas-powered cars are not going to disappear, but a lot of people are going to have a second vehicle. What electric will not work for are long trips and when you are towing something.

Q: Isn't it strange to have a car company hiring ex-MindSpring people?

A: Culturally, the two companies are pretty darned close. You are always under pressure to hire the next perfect person, but you have to be patient. Getting the person who fits with the values you want is much more important in the long run than just getting someone with the job skills.

Q: Can you talk about those values? What do you hope to bring to this business?

A: Surveys show car salesmen with low respect. That is because so many car salesmen have an emphasis on selling the car and getting that customer off the lot. I am not setting sales goals. If I set certain sales numbers, people would only be worried about selling to somebody new, not taking care of the customers that we have.

Q: But aren't there clear economic incentives to do that?

A: In certain industries, I think there are practices that are obvious but are wrong. ... We are going to make calls to customers. And customers are all going to have my email address and my phone number. People say, 'How can you do that?' Well, 5 million people in MindSpring had my email address and phone.

Q: But how do you handle any problems you have?

A: With tech stuff, something is going to go wrong. It does. And we are launching something that depends on a lot of technology — things are going to go wrong. What is important is the way we react to things going wrong. And that we react quickly. We are trying to bring that mentality to the car business.

I am making cars in batches of 100 and, if somebody makes a suggestion that will improve something, I am going to do it for the cars in the next batch. Let's not wait until the next model year.

Q: You will change the car based on suggestions from customers?

A: We put out 300 low-speed versions (of the Wheego) and we made the (dashboard) display as similar as possible to gas-powered cars. And the feedback was: No. They'd say, 'I was really disappointed that the display wasn't more futuristic.' Or, 'I thought the display would be digital.' So, we looked at each other and thought, boy, are we dummies. And we changed it.

Too many times, employees of a company feel like they know more about what the customer wants than the customer knows. I understand — you get that feedback, and it makes you feel stupid. But you've got to be able to park your ego.



Wheego Delivers LiFe as Earth Day Gift

April 26, 2011

Wheego released their electric vehicle on Earth Day. This eco-friendly car named LiFe is the first highway-speed, all-electric car from Wheego. Strikingly, its name is derived from its Lithium (Li)-Ion (Fe) batteries that it deploys within.



The wheel of LiFe was taken over by proud owners Asma and Kevin Henry, residents of the Virginia Highland neighborhood in Atlanta on the occasion. Wheego, committed in creating automobiles with economical, ecological and fuel sustainability, hopes this will be the first step towards reducing America's dependency on foreign oil.

LiFe, much of a pride product of the company, had been in the pipeline for more than a year now. The zero emission automobile comes with interesting specs.

The Wheego LiFe can drive upto 100 miles (161 km) on a single charge and is augmented with passenger and driver airbags, anti-lock brakes, power windows and locks, and optional air conditioning. The 115V lithium battery pack can be charged from a standard 120V outlet, a 240V outlet or any of the J1772 standard charging stations set up at public locations across the United States. Wheego LiFe is available in 19 countries and retails for \$32,995. Further, it is qualified for a grant \$7,500 Federal tax credit. The car is being offered in red, white, blue, black, silver, and green hues.



Watch out Leaf, Wheego LiFe EV hits the streets

by Wayne Cunningham for [CNet](#), April 25, 2011

The tiny segment of electric [cars](#) just got a little more crowded, as Wheego announces the delivery of its first LiFe electric car today. Similar to the [Nissan Leaf](#), the Wheego LiFe runs off lithium ion batteries, has a range of about 100 miles, and, with a top speed of 65 mph, is freeway legal.

The first delivery, which heralds the general availability of this two-seat electric runabout, went to a couple in Georgia. The car was sold through a Jim Ellis dealership in Atlanta. Wheego has [dealerships](#) signed up across the country.

The name of the LiFe uses the periodic table abbreviations for lithium and iron, Li and Fe. The body and chassis for the car come from Shuanghuan Automobile in China. Wheego fits it with a 60-horsepower electric motor and 30 kilowatt-hour lithium ion battery pack.

As a two seater, the Wheego LiFe is similar in format to the [Smart Electric Drive](#), although the Wheego uses a front-wheel-drive format and has greater range. Cabin tech in the Wheego is limited to a stereo head unit with a CD slot and USB port.

Wheego sells the LiFe for \$32,995, and notes that a Federal tax credit of \$7,500 may be claimed for purchasing the car.



Electric Car, Wheego LiFe, Starts Delivery on Earth Day

April 22, 2011

The two-seat compact car, travels approximately 100 miles on a single charge and retails for \$32,995.

Wheego Electric Cars, an Atlanta, Ga.-based manufacturer of all-electric cars, delivers its first Wheego LiFe, a highway-speed 100% electric car, on Earth Day- April 22, 2011. "We are very proud of this car and the American spirit that it represents," said Mike McQuary, CEO of Wheego Electric Cars. "The delivery of our first Wheego LiFe electric car culminates four years of research and development, and is perfectly timed to support President Obama's Energy Plan. President Obama will direct Federal agencies to buy 100% alternative fuel vehicles by 2015, and is asking for a major increase in fuel economy for 2017-2025 model year automobiles. The Wheego LiFe is ready to help meet that demand: it is affordable, all-electric, and available across the country now."

The Wheego LiFe, a two-seat compact car, travels approximately 100 miles on a single charge and retails for \$32,995.

The 115V lithium battery pack can be charged from a standard 120V outlet, a 240V outlet or any of the J1772 standard charging stations being installed in public locations throughout the United States.

It qualifies for a \$7,500 Federal tax credit, as well as many state incentives such as tax credits (up to \$5,000 in Georgia) and HOV lane access.



Atlanta Couple Buys First Wheego Electric Car

by Chris Woodyard for [USA Today](#), April 22, 2011



Asma Henry tries out the new Wheego LiFe that she and her husband bought.

An Atlanta couple today become the first to buy a Wheego LiFe, a novel electric car that looks a lot like a Smart car.

The first owners of a Wheego LiFe are Asma and Kevin Henry, who bought the car from a local car dealer, Jim Ellis Automotive, wheego says. Kevin told Wheego officials that buying the \$32,995 LiFe was his wife's idea. Asma, a freelance

consultant in international assistance programs, walks and bikes to neighborhood shops and tries to be environmentally friendly by doing things like drying the laundry on a clothesline. Wheego officials are thrilled:

"We are very proud of this car and the American spirit that it represents," said Mike McQuary, CEO of Wheego Electric Cars. "The delivery of our first Wheego LiFe electric car culminates four years of research and development, and is perfectly timed to support President Obama's Energy Plan.

He noted that Obama has directed federal agencies to buy alternative fuel vehicles by 2015. Wheego is hoping to cash in on some of that action.

The Wheego LiFe goes up to 100 miles on a single charge. It qualifies for a \$7,500 federal tax credit, as well as state incentives such as tax credits (up to \$5,000 in Georgia) and solo car-pool lane access.



Wheego Electric Vehicle Featured At 2011 Denver Auto Show

by Jonathan McGrew, March 29, 2011

In the electric car realm there are many players, a lot of them small. So if we asked you if you had heard of a Wheego, you wouldn't be alone if your answer was no. That is the fun of auto shows and in the Rocky Mountain region, the 2011 Denver Auto Show is living up to the reputation of bringing the latest models on-sale, but also the latest technology to the show floor for consumers to see.

For Colorado residents green technology is important, perhaps it is the Rocky Mountains right out our backdoor or maybe it is the fact that cities like Boulder and Golden are home to environmental studies and agencies. Boulder even has a Tesla dealer downtown on Pearl Street. Getting back to the Wheego, the all-electric vehicle is a less well known, but very capable city vehicle that competes directly with the Smart ForTwo Electric—a car we



haven't seen in the Rocky Mountain region yet. What is the Wheego? It is an Atlanta-based electric car company that made its debut to consumers in the U.S. back in 2009 with the Whip two-seater electric. The Whip was considered a short-distance, low-powered electric that would be right at home in a busy urban environment. Sales were only about 300 units last year for the Whip, but the company expects higher volumes and more success with the LiFe two-seater. The LiFe is a highway-ready and crash-tested vehicle that achieves 100 miles on a full charge—the number that is

quickly becoming the standard range among electric car offerings. It will even recharge from 50% to 100% in about 5 hours on a 220V/240V outlet.

As we said, American-made and costs right about \$33K before any tax incentives. Sound intriguing for your commute to work in the Denver Metro Area? What about around Boulder, Ft. Collins or Colorado Springs? Heck, even if you are in town for the weekend and haven't seen this and the other electric vehicles on display, then you should head over to the 2011 Denver Auto Show at the downtown convention center and see them in person. You can even drive some of them as part of the Manufacturer Ride and Drive program starting this Friday, April 1st.





THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

Wheego pins hopes on electric car desire

Excerpted from an AJC article by [David Markiewicz](#), March 13, 2011

Last year, Stephen Currie bought an electric car, the Wheego Whip, “probably for the usual reasons.”

Stephen Currie owns the Wheego Whip and plans to buy a Wheego Life when it rolls out late March. Currie bought his Whip a little over a year ago and charges the electric vehicle each night in his car porch. The Wheego is not a hybrid. It doesn't require any gas and has about 100 miles per charge, about 5 hours, on a 220V/240V outlet.



The Atlanta resident said he wanted “to help the environment, lower our carbon imprint and reduce our dependency on foreign oil.” His purchase was also an experiment. “I wanted to see,” he said, “if electric cars were viable.” Many years and many product iterations into the development of the electric vehicle, America is about to answer that same question.

Major automakers, including Ford, General Motors and Nissan, are on the cusp of rolling out to the public all-electric or hybrid-electric cars. They include the Focus Electric, the

Chevy Volt and the Leaf, and industry executives and observers are anxiously waiting to see whether consumers will take to them the way they have gas-powered cars and trucks for more than a century. "We're at this inflection point, and nobody's really sure [how electric car sales] will go," said James Bell, an executive market analyst with Kelley Blue Book.

One manufacturer with a huge stake in the answer is Atlanta-based Wheego Electric Cars. Wheego hit the streets in 2009 with its short-distance, low-powered Whip two-seater and is following that up with the introduction of the longer-distance, highway-ready and crash-tested LiFe two-seater. The LiFe is expected to be in dealerships by the end of this month. Whip sales weren't robust (300 were sold through last year), and some critics question how large the electric market can be and how many makers and models it will support. But prospective buyers have lined up for Nissan's much-publicized Leaf, generating optimism about demand for the technology.

Wheego is betting that its emphasis on quality and personalized customer service will win it loyal owners. The company expects that its conservative business model, which outsources production and the heavy costs to a plant in California, will hold down overhead and help produce a profit even if sales don't match those of a traditional auto company or traditional vehicle. Wheego executives share the industrywide belief that drivers will view electric models as the second or even third vehicle in the family garage, something perfect for shorter urban trips to work or shopping or school. And that's fine with them.

Currie has been sold enough on his experience with the Whip that he is in line to buy a LiFe. "It's a fun car to drive, it's easy to park and there's been no issue with range," he said, pointing to an ongoing concern with electric vehicles: Drivers fear their battery will run out of juice and leave them stranded.

Electric vehicles, most of which can go about 100 miles on a charge, can be recharged overnight using a regular outlet. Hybrids such as the Volt can tap into gas power if the battery runs down.

Currie calls his electric experience "normal, for lack of a better word."

"You forget you're driving an electric, to tell you the truth," he said, "until you're at a stoplight and you catch people looking at you."

While no new car may be truly inexpensive, some critics regard the price of electric cars as high, especially considering their relatively limited use. Currie figures the price will be about \$32,000 for the LiFe, but by using federal and state tax credits designed to promote sales, he thinks it will probably cost him closer to \$20,000.

Wheego plans to interact with its owners long after the sale, an unusual practice in the industry and one it thinks will create more satisfied owners. But its position in the electric-car marketplace also will rely on support from the network of auto dealers it is building across the country. The company is shooting for about 70 dealers by the end of this year.

Wheego LiFe Coming to Dealerships this Month

March 10, 2011

Amidst all the fanfare about plug-in electric vehicles coming soon to a dealer near you, one startup has actually come through. Atlanta-based Wheego Electric Cars rolled out the limited distance, low-speed Whip model last year, and will be delivering to dealers its longer-range, highway-speed LiFe model by the end of March. The LiFe is made of 80% North American parts (20% from China), and is engineered and assembled in California.

It can go 100 miles on a charge, is powered by lithium battery technology, and will retail for \$32,995. It is eligible for \$7,500 in federal tax credits as well as state tax credits. Wheego is networking with dealers across the country and setting up alliances. Wheego said it expects to sell about 2,500 LiFe units at retail this year. The company also hopes for fleet sales to governments and schools. It sold 300 Whips last year.

Watts up: A stampede of new electric cars

Excerpted from an article by Dave Guilford, March 7, 2011

You can count the number of electric vehicle and plug-in hybrid models being sold to consumers today on two hands—and have several fingers left over.

But that's about to change. Competitors are lining up to take on the Nissan Leaf, Tesla Roadster, Chevrolet Volt and other pioneering [vehicles](#).

Most major automakers will bring out at least one battery-powered EV or plug-in hybrid in the next three years. A few start-ups also plan retail sales.

That probably won't translate to big sales during this decade. Paul Haelterman, managing director of automotive consulting at IHS Global Insight, says plug-ins and EVs will account for just 1 to 2 percent of North American sales through 2015.

"For the next five years, they're niche vehicles, pure and simple," he says.

The main reason: For the average driver, the payback period for the added cost of such vehicles will be about 15 years, Haelterman says. Also, the recharging infrastructure is lacking.

But, he adds, rising petroleum prices and the declining cost of EV technology should make the vehicles less pricey by 2020. Add tougher fuel economy and emissions rules, and automakers have little choice. They have to get in the electrified-propulsion game, if only to be prepared in case consumer tastes shift quickly.

Here's an overview of coming EVs and plug-ins, based on what the companies and industry sources are saying.

WHEEGO

Atlanta-based startup Wheego says it will start retail sales of the LiFe, a two-seat EV microcar, on March 30. It plans a five-seat car this year, followed by a light truck.

10 best electric cars for economy, speed and range

Excerpted from an article by John Brandon, February 23, 2011

In Depth: Could these be the cars that turn you off petrol?

For those who've decided to abandon the petrol-powered engine, choosing from among a growing list of electric cars is difficult. Is the total range more important than any whizzy features on the dash?

Should the aerodynamic design on the outside trump any total-cost-of-ownership savings? To guide you into decision mode, here are some salient points about each of the best electric cars around.

Wheego LiFe



A small two-seater similar to the Smart Fortwo, the LiFe goes about 160 km on one charge. Because the LiFe runs on smaller 115-volt lithium batteries, it takes just 5 hours to get a full charge. The Wheego LiFe also gets the distinction of being one of the cheapest electric cars at around 20,000 pounds. The LiFe is planned for release early this year and is the second Silicon Valley EV after the Tesla.

Automotive News

Wheego Sees March Launch

by Lindsay Chappell, February 6, 2011



Photo by Joe Wilssens

Wheego, the startup electric car brand that uses a Chinese body and U.S. components, is building its first 500 orders and expects to launch retail sales March 30. The Atlanta venture received U.S. regulatory approval at the end of December to begin selling a highway-safe two-seat LiFe model through 35 U.S. dealers. "We are ready to go," said Jeff Boyd, president of Wheego Electric Cars Inc.

Boyd said he could have 70 dealers by year end, and Wheego is exhibiting at the NADA convention to talk to prospective dealers. He said 24 potential dealers requested information on the franchise during the first morning of the convention. Boyd's pitch is that the franchise has no upfront investment requirements. It has no rules on store design or signs and no requirements on service tooling or parts inventories. Dealers must commit to ordering a specified number of vehicles, depending on their market potential, and must agree to provide mobile vehicle service, Boyd said.

"Ninety-five percent of what could go wrong with this car can be fixed in the customer's driveway," Boyd claimed. Boyd said the company's assembly center in Ontario, Calif., will produce 200 cars a month for about 90 days and then ramp up volume as retail orders build. He said the operation has capacity to turn out 60,000 vehicles a year. The model runs on a lithium-iron battery pack made by California-based Flux Power Inc. that claims a 100-mile range.

The car will retail for \$33,995, including dealer delivery, before a \$7,500 federal rebate.



Report card time: The L.A. auto show cars get graded

by Jim Motavalli, November 2010

Believe it or not, the bulk of cars on display in Los Angeles get A or B grades. Here's the complete list, plus our analysis.

LOS ANGELES — I am at Starbucks outside the main floor of the Los Angeles Auto Show, and Mark Cooper of the Consumer Federation of America (CFA) is waving a report card in my face. In this case, it's cars that are being graded on fuel economy, and (as with people) there are A and C students, even a shameful D or two.

It's worth thinking about this holiday weekend. The Environment America group just released a report entitled "Gobbling Less Gas for Thanksgiving" (I had to get that title in there) that Americans could save \$234 million at the pumps this weekend if they had 60 mpg cars. That has been proposed as a possible federal mandate for 2025, but it's a long way from reality.

Cooper is the director of research at CFA, and what he's done is give letter grades to all 39 new cars on display at the Los Angeles show. His marks were calculated using the formula that the EPA has proposed for auto window stickers. The industry isn't thrilled, but what a great idea! What grade do you think your car would get? Here are the ratings of the L.A. cars:

A+ Cars: (all electric, except for the fuel-cell Benz). BMW Mini E, Coda sedan, Mercedes-Benz B-Series F-Cell, Mitsubishi I-MiEV, Nissan Leaf, **Wheego LiFe**, Honda FCX Clarity, Honda Fit EV, Fisker Karma, Toyota RAV4 EV, Volvo C30 electric, Volkswagen Golf Blue emotion, Chevrolet Volt.

B+ Cars: Audi A3 TDI (diesel), Lincoln MKZ Hybrid, Volkswagen Golf TDI (diesel), Hyundai Elantra, Hyundai Sonata Hybrid, Fiat 500 Cinquecento, Ford Fiesta, Kia Optima Hybrid, Infiniti M35 Hybrid.

B Cars: Audi A7 Sportback, Kia Optima sedan, Volkswagen Eos, BMW X3, Mazda S.

B- Cars: Porsche Cayenne S Hybrid, Nissan Murano Cross Cabriolet, Nissan Quest, Saab 9-4X, Porsche 911 Carrera, Dodge Charger, Chevrolet Camaro Convertible LT, Porsche 911 Speedster.

C+ Car: BMW ActiveHybrid 7.

C Cars: Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG, Dodge Durango, Nissan GT-R, Range Rover Evoque.



It could have been worse. The Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano and Mercedes-Benz Maybach 57 would have gotten a D+ if they'd been there, and the Ferrari 612 Scaglietti a D. What's heartening is the number of A+ and B+ cars on display, a clear majority.

If 2010 vehicles got letter grades, there'd be 40 rating B+, 218 getting B, and a whopping 369 (the largest group) getting B-. Some 19 would come away with Ds.

America's car fleet is getting better. Fuel economy for 2009 models showed a 1.4 mpg increase, according to the EPA. The average vehicle achieved 22.4 mpg, which is a whopping seven percent increase over 2008. A lot of this is Americans switching from trucks to cars, and SUVs moving from truck chassis to crossovers based on more fuel-efficient cars. Trucks are now at their lowest share of the vehicle fleet since 1995. And 14 of the 15 manufacturers selling cars in the U.S. showed mileage gains.

"What's interesting about this is that gas prices are not that high, especially when compared to the \$4 people paid in 2008," Cooper said. "There was also a big increase in people buying four-cylinder vehicles."

Cooper told me that Americans could easily adapt to electric cars, since 85 percent of travel is in trips of 100 miles (the EV's range limit). And he said (consumers take note!) that electrics cost just \$2 to operate for 40 miles. If the upfront costs are high (and they are, with \$32,000 a good starting point before federal rebates), Cooper points out that a buyer who takes out a six percent auto loan will be "cash-flow positive" almost immediately because of fuel savings. "The costs are lower in the first month," he said.

Will electric vehicle prices come down with scale? Cooper is convinced they will. "When it reaches 60,000 sales annually, the Chevy Volt will be making money," he said. That's interesting, because I recently quoted former auto czar Steven Rattner saying that the car will cost \$40,000 to build (and sell for \$41,000). Scale certainly helps.

I don't know if cars will end up with letter grades on the window stickers, but I think it certainly helps consumers make a quick judgment on the showroom floor.



Florida Gets An All-Electric Car Dealership

by Colin Bird, November 30, 2010

A new car dealership opening in Florida could be the first electric-only car lot for the Sunshine State.

Suncoast Electric Vehicles will open in St. Petersburg in three weeks and will sell the **Wheego Whip LiFe**.



photo by Chris Woodyard

The Wheego is a Chinese-sourced but California-assembled electric car. It has a 100-mile range per charge, can go up to 70 mph and is highway certified. The Wheego Whip LiFe is available for \$32,995 before a \$7,500 tax credit. That's about \$20 more expensive than the base price of the electric 2011 Nissan Leaf.

The dealership will be equipped with solar-fueled charging stations, which will allow Suncoast customers to charge up for free:

It seems a bit of gamble opening an EV-only dealership in one of America's most car-dependent states, but Suncoast Electric Vehicles owner Richard Nimphie said he's already sold 12 EVs before opening his showroom. There's no word on what other electric vehicles will be sold at the dealership, but boutique automakers like Think and Coda could be possibilities.



THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

Eclectic electrics: Atlanta-based company to unveil all-electric LiFe

by Clare Morris for the [Atlanta Auto Show](#), March 15, 2011

If the prognosticators are correct, metro Atlanta drivers will face \$5 per gallon [gas prices](#) by [Christmas](#). But Mike McQuary says there's an alternative, and he'll be unveiling it at the Atlanta International Auto Show.



It's taken four years to perfect the new, all-electric LiFe, said McQuary, CEO of Atlanta-based Wheego Electric Cars. It was well worth the wait, he adds, for the vehicle that travels 100 miles on a single charge and can go as fast as 65 miles per hour.

"LiFe is not a hybrid; it's 100 percent electric," said McQuary, who named the car for the atomic symbols for lithium and iron. "And unlike a lot of car companies that say, when they introduce a new car, 'It will take your breath away,' we say that our car is meant just to do the opposite, because there are no exhaust fumes."

In addition to its cleaner exhaust system, the LiFe offers budget-minded consumers another advantage, McQuary said.

"It's good for the economic reasons that show on a per-mile basis, you'll spend about one-tenth of what you would on a gas-powered car," he said. "And at the same time, it's a way to help us reduce our dependency on foreign oil."

Even the price tag comes with a good deal: The \$32,995 cost makes it one of the most affordable electric cars on the market. It's even more affordable for buyers in Georgia, who can pick up \$7,500 in federal tax credits and \$5,000 in state credits for making a purchase.

"After that, the car is about \$20,000, which is a heck of a deal," McQuary said.

The two-seat, hatchback LiFe comes with a standard plug-in unit — the same one used by other electric car manufacturers — that recharges the battery in about 20 hours. It can also plug directly in a 220-volt circuit (the same type used for refrigerators and dryers), and will take eight hours to get back to full power.

The California-built LiFe is the next generation of electric vehicles that Wheego has produced. Its first concept, the Wheego Whip, was limited to speeds of 35 mph or lower, but it launched the brand and served as a model for consumer feedback.

"It was like a golf cart on steroids," McQuary joked. "But we learned a lot from that technology. In 2009, we finished the first prototype car and moved on."

The company's business is half automotive and technology, with a strong customer-service component. The plan is similar to the one McQuary used when he was part of the startup crew for Mindspring, one of the first Internet providers.

"At Mindspring, you could always call and get help if you wanted to fix things on your computer," he said. "We applied the same model to an electric car. Instead of going to a mechanic or dealer, you can call us and find customer-service people who will talk to you about your car. And we believe that buyers do want to understand what's going on with their cars."

When the car arrives at Atlanta-area Jim Ellis showrooms later this month, it will come in six colors and with standard features such as a stereo system and Bluetooth capability. One thing Georgians may want to tack on is an air conditioning system.

"One of our big markets is in the Northwest," McQuary said. "It's a very environmentally progressive area, and they didn't want AC, so it's an option. But otherwise, the fits and amenities are just as nice as any other car."

McQuary said public reaction to LiFe has been overwhelmingly positive. But with only 100 miles per charge, it does challenge drivers to be a bit less spontaneous.

"You do have to plan your day a bit," McQuary said. "But otherwise, we believe LiFe is a car people will be excited to drive."

Two other electric vehicles will appear at the show. The Nissan Leaf is a five-door, five-passenger vehicle that can go up to 100 miles on a single charge and easily reaches speeds of 90 mph. The hatchback features four-wheel, power-assisted disc brakes and front and side airbags. The manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$32,780 before tax credits.

The Chevrolet Volt, the 2011 Motor Trend Car of the Year, is a four-person vehicle equipped with an electric motor that's easily charged from a home outlet and can power it for the first 25 to 50 miles. Beyond that range, a gasoline generator kicks in, providing electricity for the motor and giving the car a range of 344 miles with a full, 9.3-gallon tank. Unlike conventional hybrids that have gas engines for faster driving, the Volt's engine is completely electric. The Volt has an MSRP of \$40,280 before tax credits.

Wanna Wheego?

January, 2011

Anyone in the market for an electric car that can seat two passengers comfortably and get up to 100 miles on a single charge won't have to burn too much gas to find one now.

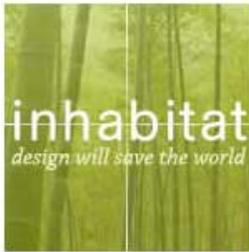
Suncoast Electric Vehicles in St. Petersburg has signed on as the Gulf Coast's exclusive dealership for the Wheego, a four-wheel ride with a 115-volt lithium battery that can be juiced up from a standard 120-volt outlet (or one with 240 volts where available). Grand opening events are planned for Jan. 20-24, including test drives.

Richard Nimphie, owner of the local dealership and a longtime vehicle sales and leasing veteran, says he expects the Wheego to be well received by the environmentally conscious Tampa Bay region.

"This area has a rich automotive history," Nimphie tells Coffee Talk, noting that the dealership's location at 2401 Fourth St. N. was once part of St. Petersburg's "auto mall" back in the 1920s and '30s.

Wheego's two-seat Whip and LiFe models will be available initially, with rollouts of a planned five-seat model and light truck planned later this year, he says. Pricing for the vehicles is posted at \$32,995, but it qualifies for a \$7,500 federal tax credit plus state tax incentives.

Atlanta-based Wheego, launched by former MindSpring entrepreneur Mike McQuary, has two Florida dealerships among 20 nationwide. The low-speed cars are available in five different colors and include standard safety features such as air bags and anti-lock brakes, plus optional air conditioning.



Wheego LiFe Electric Vehicle Will Hit the Road in Early 2011

by Brit Liggett, December 29, 2010



Close on the heels of the Volt and the Leaf, a little company called Wheego is gearing up to ship their adorable electric vehicles out to their proud new owners at the start of the new year. The company got EPA approval for their Wheego LiFe EV and is now awaiting the go from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration. The LiFe two-seater has a price tag of \$32,995 (only \$25,495 after the \$7,500 tax credit) has a range of 100 miles per charge, is made of 75% U.S. content and is assembled in Ontario, California. Sounds like a

sweet, American-made green transportation machine to us.

Autoblog notes that the LiFe's body is based off of the Chinese-made Shuanghuan Noble but the company explains that only the chassis comes to them from China. It is then reinforced for US crash test standards and the transmission, motor, batteries, wiring, software and controller — which are all US made — are installed. The car runs on a 30 kWh lithium iron phosphate battery pack, tops out at 65 miles per hour and Wheego says it takes 5 hours to fully charge. The LiFe is perhaps best fit for an urban setting — it is small and not all that powerful — and with dimensions just a tad larger than a Smart Car, will surely be a city-parking dream.

Wheego had originally thought that they'd be the first affordable EV to hit the market but it seems that the "ok" from the powers that be — the EPA and the NHTSA — was what was holding back their shipments. Unlike the Leaf and the Volt, the LiFe is shipping on a first come, first serve basis. That means no starting markets centralized in EV friendly territories — if you're in Podunk, Wyoming and you're ready to charge an EV in your garage, you can reserve a LiFe to call your own.

Innovative Business Models and New Partnerships are Driving the Automotive Sector

by Richard Matthews, December 8, 2010

There is a new competitive environment emerging in the hybrid-electric automotive market. International partnerships are powering new automotive innovations. A host of unique business models are powering new battery car startups and new partnerships are enhancing their competitive positioning.

Fleet sales are key to the strategy of many of new hybrid-electric vehicles. These new vehicles are capable of meeting the daily driving requirements of most fleets they can also reduce fuel costs, proactively respond to emissions regulation and provide add to their marketing allure.

General Electric has announced that it will switch to battery power for half its huge sales and service fleet. General Motors alone stands to pick up orders for at least 12,000 Volt plug-in hybrids.

According to Robbie Diamond, CEO of a trade group known as the Electrification Coalition. Fleet buyers are helping to provide the momentum needed by EV and hybrid producers to reach critical mass. "Fleet owners and operators can lead the way in this transformation...to accelerate the development of electric vehicles."

Canada's Azure Dynamics is focusing on fleet sales by converting light and medium-duty trucks, such as the Ford Transit Connect Electric. the firm's close relationship with Ford Motor Co., which is providing the Transit Connect gliders that are being converted to battery power

Competition is growing with new car companies like Amp, Aptera, Fisker, Tesla, Think, Wheego and others are taking on the behemoths who have long dominated the automotive market.

"It's the first time where that's been possible in more than a half-century," said Jim Taylor, a former General Motors executive who has served as general manager of both the Cadillac and Hummer and is now a board member for Amp.

Amp has a modified version of the Chevrolet Equinox that replaces its fossil fuel engine with its proprietary lithium-powered drive train. Rather than going head to head with the automotive giants, companies like Amp are seeking to exploit the larger SUV niche.

Others like Atlanta-based Wheego, are competing directly with the big boys, while limiting the size of its internal development team by partnering with outside contractors to hold down costs. The name Wheego refers to the ferrous-based lithium-ion batteries that power the car.

Wheego has engaged a small Chinese automaker to provide the unpowered body (glider) for Wheego's new LiFE.

According to some, traditional automakers may not be sufficiently agile to adopt to such a low-cost business strategy. “This is a market sector that is very much contingent on new technology, unlike the combustion engine segment, where there hasn’t been a truly significant breakthrough in half a century,” says Wheego’s firm’s CEO, Mike McQuary.

Tesla Motors, initially came to market with a low-volume, high-priced sports car, the Tesla Roadster. However, starting in 2012, Tesla plans to move more mainstream with the Model S sedan. Tesla is forming a series of alliances including Daimler AG (Mercedes-Benz and Smart car brands) and Toyota. These new partnerships, will help to make Tesla much more viable over the long-term.

Wheego Offers Smooth Ride With LiFe, Promises Stellar Customer Relations

by Erik Derr, November 2010

LOS ANGELES – Wheego Electric Cars Inc. is chasing a bigger slice of the electric-vehicle pie with an emphasis on customer service and a new full-speed model that holds its own in downtown L.A. traffic.

The 2-seat Wheego LiFe, unveiled at the auto show here and named for its 115V lithium-iron battery pack, faces its stiffest competition from General Motors Co.'s Chevrolet Volt extended-range electric vehicle and Nissan Motor Co. Ltd.'s Leaf EV, both nearing retail launch in limited markets in the U.S.

However, the LiFe is on sale now throughout the country and comes with a promise from the auto maker to keep in close touch with its dealers and customers to resolve any ownership issues that may arise.

"It's a huge differentiator, because I think the car is half technology, half automotive," CEO Mike McQuary says of the customer-service pledge. "I believe the technology model of customer service is going to be the prevailing model.

"Right now, if you have a problem with your software or your internet service, you call techno support or customer service and they'll stay on the line and help you," adds McQuary, who once headed up Internet service-provider Mindspring. "I don't think the automotive industry's done a very good job of (mimicking) that."

Dealers, he says, will be a complimentary part of that service equation, not the only part.

"It's a different approach, and I think that's important because our drivers are going to want to know a lot about the car," he says. "They're going to want to know about the technology. They're going to want to know about the software."



Wheego's LiFe capable of tackling L.A. roads, traffic.

By keeping the lines of communication open and educating Wheego customers, those same people “are going to become our best sales people.”

Capable of traveling about 100 miles (161 km) on a single charge and reaching a top speed of 80 mph (129 km/h), the Wheego LiFe taken for a test drive here the day before its debut demonstrates it has the acceleration and maneuverability needed to negotiate midday traffic along the surface streets and freeways of downtown L.A.

A “Sport” mode provides even better off-the-line acceleration.

The LiFe's interior doesn't feel cramped, and the dashboard controls are straightforward but easy on the eyes. Its digital readout includes a speedometer/odometer, a volt meter, monitor for the battery's overall charge and a tool that calculates the car engine's energy efficiency.

However, without the radio turned on and the windows partially up, the hum of the motor is quite noticeable, particularly at higher speeds. The gear selector is a bit tight and not the easiest to shift.

Still, even though it is small, the LiFe feels and acts like a conventional car.

The Wheego EV is available in red, white, blue, black, silver and green and comes fully-equipped with driver and passenger airbags, antilock brakes and power windows and locks. Air conditioning is optional.

The car's battery can be charged from a standard 120V outlet, a 240V outlet or any of the J1772 standard charging stations being installed in public locations throughout the U.S. Priced at \$32,995, the LiFe qualifies for a \$7,500 federal tax credit as well as various state incentives.

Wheego plans to add a 5-passenger sedan and a light truck to its lineup within the next 18 months.

Forbes

Look out Leaf & Volt, the Wheego Electric Car is Almost Here

Excerpted from an article by Osha Gray Davidson, November 24, 2010

The CarElectric.com's number one reason for owning an all-electric vehicle (EV) — *You drive less than 40 miles per day* — is a tough sell here in Phoenix, Arizona, where sprawl is just how we've rolled for the last couple of decades.

But the popularity of the new light-rail system (along with the spectacular burst of the housing bubble) suggests that Phoenicians may be considering a sustainable (*shudder*) lifestyle. What could be more fitting, after all, for a city named after a creature that self-immolates and then rises out of its own ashes? Thankfully, some EVs may do just fine in Phoenix.

Take, for example, the ready-to-be-delivered-any-day, Wheego LiFe. Although Phoenix isn't on the list of early test markets, the Wheego could do well here. According to [company specs](#), the LiFe has an optimal range of 100 miles on a single charge.

The [Nissan Leaf website](#) does a good job of showing anticipated ranges under different conditions.

- Cross-town commute on a hot day: 68 miles
- Speed: Average 49 mph
- Temperature: 110 degrees
- Climate control: On

Driving from a rural area into the city at an average 49 mph with the a/c on high may produce this range. Under these conditions, climate control combined with higher-speed driving produces increased energy consumption, hence the effect on range.

For comparison, under optimal conditions, the Leaf also has an anticipated 100 mile range.

Even better, Phoenix is one of several test markets for charging stations located around town. Range limits are greatly increased when you've got a super-fast charging station on your route (or simply an electrical outlet at your office garage.)

I've test driven the Leaf (and enjoyed its handling, acceleration, look and silent ride), but not the Wheego. My friend and colleague, [Jim Motavalli, was the first journalist to take the Wheego for a spin](#), and he seems fairly upbeat about the ride.

It's no Tesla, but it acquitted itself well enough in a test drive around downtown Los Angeles. Handling is much improved from my drive in Atlanta....Wheego has moved the battery pack forward, putting more weight on the front wheels. The car takes off well enough, but I'd like to see a bit more top-end power for comfortable cruising on the highway.

The Wheego is just one of many EVs coming to a dealer near you in 2010-11. The tiny company may be a niche vehicle, with the big players such as Nissan, Chevy (the Volt),

Honda and Toyota dominating the market. But Wheego isn't afraid to make inroads in smaller more specialized (and riskier) areas. For example: Wheego plans to offer an all electric pickup truck in the next year or so.

Gun racks in EVs? Only in America. And especially Arizona.



Wheego Aims to be the Little EV Company That Could

Excerpted from an article by Jim Motavalli, November 24, 2010

LOS ANGELES — Wheego is one of the first automakers on the ground with an electric car, but for a startup company with low overhead and a stealth marketing plan, there may not be all that much of an advantage in being ahead of the pack.



I am sitting at a small table in Kentia Hall, which amounts to the basement of the Los Angeles Convention Center, and across from me is Mike McQuary, the still-boyish, infectiously enthusiastic CEO of Wheego Electric Cars. McQuary rules a small empire – Wheego has just five and a half employees, but it has nonetheless taken its small, Smart-sized two-seat LiFe electric car (based on a Chinese gasoline vehicle) through crash testing and its arrival on the market is imminent.

According to Wheego's President, it will be delivered to dealers "in a few weeks." The Los Angeles show was its public debut.

Wheego obviously runs a tight ship, and its marketing campaign for the LiFe is relatively simple. The major manufacturers' cars, including the Nissan Leaf, Chevy Volt, Smart electric drive and Ford Focus, will be sold only in selected markets, and Wheego will go into cities where there will be a dearth of EVs — at least for a year or so, before the big guys go national. "The Volt will be in eight markets and the Volt in 10," McQuary said gleefully. "It looks like I'll have a lot of cities to myself."

McQuary said that Wheego used a similar strategy to sell 300 of its earlier low-speed cars, mostly in Oklahoma. The state is on few EV roadmaps, but McQuary said a lucrative tax incentive created a big but unlikely market. McQuary is the former president of scrappy Internet provider MindSpring (which later merged with EarthLink in 2000), and he points out that despite the challenges of competing against AOL and other big players he built the second-largest customer base in the online industry.

The LiFe has some challenges stacked up against the competition. Like the Smart and Think City, it's a two-seater. Priced at \$32,995, it's about the same price as the sophisticated, four-seat Leaf, which also enjoys a vastly bigger ad budget and name recognition. Wheego's

basement location at the LA show symbolizes its uphill climb to get recognized in an increasingly crowded EV field.

“We’re not focusing on being big, we’re focusing on being great,” McQuary said. “We’ll be happy selling in numbers that other company executives would get fired over.” By that he means 2,000 cars a year, though he’d then be pushing to double the volume.

Wheego is based in Atlanta, but sources its car in China (where it’s on the road as a gas vehicle), before shipment to California for final EV assembly. It’s a long supply line, and presumably a lot to keep track of for such a small staff.

The LiFe has 100-mile range from a 30-kilowatt-hour lithium-ion battery pack, and a top speed of around 70 mph. It’s no Tesla, but it acquitted itself well enough in a test drive around downtown Los Angeles. Handling is much improved from my drive in Atlanta, when I was the first journalist to get behind the wheel. I got a lot of wheelspin from a light front end back then, but Wheego has moved the battery pack forward, putting more weight on the front wheels. The car takes off well enough, but I’d like to see a bit more top-end power for comfortable cruising on the highway.

That could be addressed as part of a series of continuous improvements McQuary says he’s committed to for the LiFe. And it won’t be alone in Wheego’s full-speed stable for long. Within 18 months, the company wants to have a five-seat electric sedan and a pickup truck on the market. “We’re in negotiations to get the donor chassis now,” McQuary said.



Meet the EV startup challenging the big boys

Nov. 22, 2010

With the Coda Sedan delayed until late 2011 and Nissan's Leaf reportedly facing supply issues, one US electric-vehicle maker at this week's LA Auto Show has had something of a rapid push into the limelight.

Wheego, an Atlanta-based EV start-up, says that its LiFe electric vehicle will be on the roads this December, potentially beating the Leaf to the mass market.

The two-passenger vehicle is considerably smaller than the Leaf, the Chevrolet Volt or even the Mitsubishi i, making it a likely competitor to the planned Smart Fortwo electric, but if everything goes to plan, Wheego could have a considerable advantage in being the second EV to market after the Volt.

Priced at \$33,000/€24,030 (\$26,500/€19,300 after federal tax credits), the LiFe weighs only 2,667 lbs (1,210 kgs) and offers a maximum speed of 65 mph (104 km/h), with a "real world driving range" of approximately 100 miles (160 km), the same as the Leaf and the i.

More than 20 dealerships have been signed up to sell the vehicles across the US, including key early adopter states such as California, Florida and New York.

Reception of the Wheego LiFe after its LA Auto Show debut was generally positive, with *USA Today* saying "the Wheego offers a lot of fun in a small package."

LA Auto Show: EV newcomers Wheego and Coda provide alternatives to Nissan Leaf

Excerpted from an article by Rik Paul, November 19, 2010

The ongoing electrification of the car is stimulating America's entrepreneurial spirit. Startups [Fisker](#) and Tesla Motors have gotten a lot of attention with their pricey electric models. Now, two new companies have surfaced at the 2010 LA Auto Show—Coda and Wheego—with small all-electric cars aimed at mainstream buyers and innovative approaches to selling them.



Wheego, based in Atlanta, will begin delivering a small, two-seat electric city car next month. It's about the same size as the Smart ForTwo and is called the Wheego LiFe, a clever take on the elemental symbols of its battery technology: lithium (li) and iron (fe).

The LiFe will retail for \$32,995, which is similar to the price of the Nissan Leaf. The \$7,500 electric-car federal tax incentive would bring that down to about \$25,500. The company says the car will travel 100 miles on a full charge, go up to 70 mph, and takes eight hours to recharge on a 220-volt circuit (about 20 hours on a 110V circuit). While the chassis and body are built in China, Wheego says that 75 percent of the car's content is American, as are 27 of its 30 suppliers. The LiFe is assembled in Ontario, California.

The car will be sold through traditional auto dealerships throughout the country. More than 20 dealers are signed on so far in states such as California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Michigan, Washington, and the Northeast. The full dealer list is on the company's website, www.wheego.net. Customers can also order the LiFe online and have it shipped to them.

Keep an eye here for updates on these and other new EVs as the electric-car era continues to gain momentum.



Wheego electric car aims to take on Nissan, GM

by Chris Woodyard, November 17, 2010

Mike McQuary isn't afraid of taking on giants — either in technology or electric cars.



As CEO of Internet service provider MindSpring, he challenged the dominant likes of AOL and others. Now, as CEO of Wheego Electric Cars, he's going after Nissan and General Motors. Well, actually he's trying to avoid them. But either way, he'll win.



CEO Mike McQuary shows off the Wheego electric car in Los Angeles.

He's doing it with a little two-seat electric car with 100-mile range that looks like a Smart ForTwo, only is about 2 feet longer. The Wheego LiFe is a fun, easy-driving little car, as Drive On discovered on a test spin. But at \$32,995 before federal and state tax breaks, it's priced nearly the same as Nissan's five-passenger all-electric Leaf. General Motors' extended-range electric Chevrolet Volt is even more expensive at \$41,000.

McQuary says he isn't afraid. He thinks that Wheego can succeed by offering better customer service and going on sale in cities that the majors are bypassing for the moment. We'll see. For the moment, the Wheego offers a lot of fun in a small package.

The Ithaca JOURNAL

All-electric Wheego vehicles now available in Ithaca

October 19, 2010

An Ithaca, NY auto dealer is now offering a line of all-electric vehicles by Wheego. Pritchard Automotive is selling the fully electric, zero emissions cars, with the Wheego Whip LSV, or low-speed vehicle, available now and the upgraded, full-speed Whip LiFe to arrive in December.

The Whip LSV retails for \$18,995 and qualifies for a 10 percent federal tax credit. The LiFe travels approximately 100 miles on a single charge and retails for \$32,995. It qualifies for a \$7,500 federal tax credit, in addition to some state tax incentives.

The 115V lithium battery pack can be charged from a standard 120V outlet, a 240V outlet or any of the J1772 standard charging stations being installed in public locations throughout the United States. It is available in red, white, blue, black, silver and green.



Wheego Electric Cars to Debut Full-speed LiFe at Los Angeles Auto Show

October 14, 2010

ATLANTA October 13, 2010; WHEEGO ELECTRIC CARS, a U.S. manufacturer of all-electric cars, today announced it will unveil the Wheego LiFe, the nation's first affordable electric car, to the public at the Los Angeles International Auto Show in November.

“Our highway-ready, full-speed electric car, the Wheego LiFe, is in production now and will be delivered to dealers and drivers in a few weeks,” said Wheego President Jeff Boyd. “Our many LiFe reservation holders will receive their cars first.” Visitors to the LA Auto Show will be among the first to see the LiFe in person, and we think they will be delighted and intrigued with the LiFe’s spacious interior, standard equipment and overall design.”

Wheego CEO Mike McQuary and President Jeff Boyd will present the new Wheego LiFe at a press conference, held November 18 during the Los Angeles Auto Show’s media-only days (1:40 p.m., Booth # K-500). Consumers are invited to check out the Wheego LiFe and meet the Wheego team during the show’s November 19-28 public days. Wheego will be featured in the show’s new EV exhibit area in Kentia Hall.

The full-speed Wheego LiFe travels approximately 100 miles on a single charge and retails for \$32,995. It qualifies for a \$7,500 Federal tax credit, as well as many state tax incentives, including up to \$5,000 in California. The Wheego LiFe comes fully-equipped with driver and passenger airbags, anti-lock brakes, air conditioning, and power windows and locks. The 115V lithium battery pack can be charged from a standard 120V outlet, a 240V outlet or any of the J1772 standard charging stations being installed in public locations throughout the United States. It is available in red, white, blue, black, silver, and green. The Wheego LiFe is a two-seat subcompact car with fit, finish and features designed for today’s environmentally-conscious commuters.

Fuel-efficient cars offer great deals, depending on how you drive

by Nora Dunne, Sept. 16, 2010

Fuel-efficient cars carry verdant pros, and pricey cons.

How much do fuel-efficient cars cost these days? Try \$18,995 – add a bit for air conditioning, subtract some after tax credits.

That's the price tag for a 2010 Wheego Whip, currently the cheapest highway-capable, all-electric vehicle, according to its manufacturer. And unlike many of the more-publicized ultra fuel-efficient cars, the Whip is available now. For sale in California, Massachusetts, and 15 states in-between, the boxy, battery-operated two-seater requires no gas and releases zero tailpipe emissions. Plus, the car's battery can be charged using a standard household outlet.

The pros are obvious: The Whip helps drivers wean America off foreign oil and does not pollute the environment directly (of course, charging it up carries some carbon footprint). The big cons: The car takes eight hours to charge; and at full capacity, the battery only lasts for 40 miles.

Despite the negatives, Stephen Russell, a program coordinator of the Massachusetts Clean Cities coalition, says electric cars are "absolutely" part of our future.

Consumers ready to spend \$26,495 (after tax credits) can purchase Wheego's souped-up 2011 Whip LiFe. With its more powerful battery, the LiFe can go approximately 100 miles on a single charge, according to Wheego. The longer-lasting battery takes five hours to charge.

The similarly featured Nissan Leaf (\$26,220 after tax savings) will go on sale in parts of the West Coast in January and elsewhere in July.

Working a booth at this week's "Carbon Day" electric vehicle showcase in Boston, Mr. Russell told attendees, including a group of too-young-to-drive grade school students, about the benefits of alternative transportation. A few tables down, a white Wheego Whip was on display.

"You don't always need 100-percent battery to run to the store and back," he says. "If I'm commuting 20 miles a day, I can go three days on a battery that's not fully charged."

As the electric-car market grows, state and local governments are looking into building public charging stations, says Russell.

"They'll be in parking garages, Staples, Walmart," Russell forecasts. "Employers are going to begin to embrace it and put charging stations in for employees."

Last month, a Rasmussen poll showed that one in three Americans plans to buy an electric car in the next decade. Still, more than half of respondents say they're unlikely to hop aboard the electric bandwagon.

While most people wait for charging stations and lower prices, car shoppers have many options on the hybrid side. In its Vehicle Buyer's Guide, the Clean Cities coalition ranks hybrids with the best air pollution score. Honda's \$23,800 Civic Hybrid and Nissan's \$26,780 Altima Hybrid top the list.

Russell bought a used Prius hybrid last December, and says he gets 49 miles per gallon driving on the highway.

"There's more work to be done," he says. "The problem right now is the cost."

He has high hopes, though, that energy technology will improve – both within and outside of the automotive world.

"Eventually, you'll be able to put a solar panel on your house, and use it to charge your car," he predicts.

wheego whip LiFe



Auto giants, tiny start-ups in race to mass-produce electric cars

Excerpted from an article by Laura Hampson, August 15, 2010

At the turn of the 20th century, drivers grew accustomed to putting gasoline in their cars instead of feeding their horses. Now several car manufacturers are hoping you won't mind plugging in your car instead of filling it up at the pump.

But with slow speeds and high prices, mainstream America has not embraced electric cars. Most major car manufacturers and several smaller start-up manufacturers are racing to create an all-electric car capable of hitting the highway without breaking the bank.

Nissan, Mitsubishi, Chevrolet and Ford have announced plans to produce highway-speed electric cars within the next year.

The Whip LiFe

Atlanta-based Wheego might beat the big boys to the punch with its second car, the Whip LiFe. The all-electric car can reach 65 mph and will ship starting Sept. 1. It seats two and has a range of about 100 miles on one charge, according to Wheego.

"We hope to be the first affordable all-electric solution," said Susan Nicholson, manager of public relations for Wheego Electric Cars.

Many electric cars on the U.S. market are also not capable of highway speeds. The GEM car from Chrysler's Global Electric Motorcars division can go up to 25 mph and doesn't meet the same safety requirements as faster cars. It can go about 40 miles on a charge and costs about \$13,000.

The California-based Zap Xebra can reach speeds of 40 mph and has three wheels, which legally makes it a motorcycle. It can go about 25 miles on a charge and retails for about \$12,000. The Tesla Roadster, in production since 2008, can reach 125 mph, but retails for more than \$100,000.

Several manufacturers have electric cars in production stages or have cars available only in Europe. Daimler began testing electric Smart cars in London in 2007; it says they will be mass-produced in the U.S. starting in 2012.

The Wheego LiFe will retail for about \$35,990, with air conditioning and delivery. It qualifies for the maximum tax incentive of \$7,500, which brings the price down to about \$28,490. Wheego began taking reservations, with a \$100 refundable fee, in June. The cars are assembled in California.



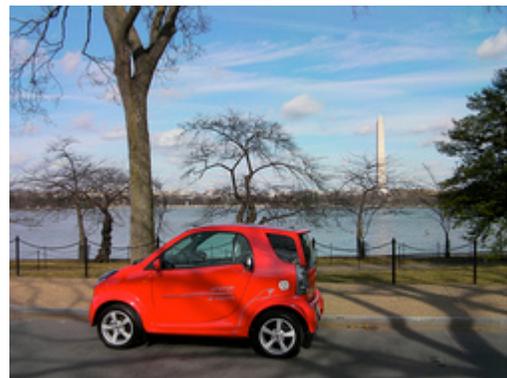
Wheego Electric Cars Now on GSA Schedule

The all-electric Wheego Whip LSV is available on the General Services Administration Schedule 23 for Low Speed Vehicles (LSVs).

Atlanta, GA ([PRWEB](#)) June 29, 2010 — WHEEGO ELECTRIC CARS today announced the Wheego Whip LSV is available on the General Services Administration Schedule 23 for Low Speed Vehicles (LSVs).

The GSA contract facilitates Wheego Electric Cars selling LSVs to Federal Agencies, affiliated companies and military installations across the U.S.

“The Wheego Whip LSV is an excellent choice for government fleets,” explains Wheego President Jeff Boyd. “It is one of the few all-electric vehicles on the GSA schedule that is a ‘real’ car and not a golf cart. It is street-legal, with an all-steel body, enclosed cabin, heater and radio, plus available air conditioning. It’s all-electric and produces zero emissions, so it will help government agencies meet their federally mandated energy conservation goals. We anticipate our highway-speed car, the Wheego LiFe, will be added to the GSA Schedule after it launches in the U.S. in September.”



Executive Order 13423 – “Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management,” signed by former President George W. Bush, mandates that federal agencies (a) improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions of the agency, through reduction of energy intensity by (i) 3 percent annually through the end of fiscal year 2015, or (ii) 30 percent by the end of fiscal year 2015, relative to the baseline of the agency’s energy use in fiscal year 2003.

The initial Wheego offering is the Whip LSV, which is available now. The Whip LSV is an all-electric low speed vehicle which can be driven on roads with posted speed limits of 35 miles per hour or less, including streets on military bases across the U.S. The Wheego Whip LSV is now listed on GSA Schedule 23 for LSV’s under contract number GS-30F-0036W.

The next Wheego offering, the Lithium-based full-speed Wheego LiFe, will begin shipping to customers across the U.S. in September. It will go approximately 100 miles on a charge, and will be fully crash-tested and highway-ready. Wheego is taking reservations for the Wheego LiFe now at [Wheego.net](#).

About Wheego Electric Cars

Wheego Electric Cars is an innovation-driven and environmentally-conscious manufacturer of Electric Vehicles (EVs). Under the leadership of Mike McQuary, CEO and former MindSpring entrepreneur, Wheego Electric Cars has become a leader in the integration of advanced technology components. Wheego Electric Cars is one of the first EV companies to deliver affordable fully capable, street legal all-electric cars for everyday consumer use.

For more information about Wheego, visit the company website at www.wheego.net.



Wheego Starts Taking LiFe EV Reservations

June 16, 2010

The Wheego Whip LiFe qualifies for a \$7,500 Federal tax credit, dropping the net price to under \$26,000. States such as California and Georgia offer State tax credits or rebates up to \$5,000 to further reduce the net price of the car. In addition, Congress has legislation pending that proposes an additional \$2,000 electric vehicle incentive.

Power comes from the 30 kWh pack that uses 36 (3.2V) cells at 260AH, which is enough for 100-mile range and a top speed of 65 mph to speed for the Wheego Whip LiFe.

The new Wheego Whip LiFe comes fully-equipped with driver and passenger airbags, anti-lock brakes, air conditioning, and power windows and locks. The 115V lithium battery pack can be charged from a standard 120V outlet, a 240V outlet or any of the J1772 standard charging stations. It is available in red, white, blue, black, silver, and green.

“We are on schedule to be the first company to offer an affordable all-electric car in the U.S.,” announced Wheego CEO Mike McQuary. “Other auto companies have made announcements of the upcoming availability of their electric cars, but for the most part, their cars are being released in only a few cities, and in limited quantities. Our Wheego Whip LiFe will ship to customers first-come, first-served across the U.S. beginning in September, and everyone who makes a reservation will be driving their car before the end of the year. The Whip LiFe has a lithium battery pack, is made of 75% U.S. content, and is assembled in Ontario, California. It is an example of American ingenuity at its finest.”



Wheego Whip LiFe sales start today

by Ken Edelstein, [My Green ATL](#), June 15, 2010

Wheego opened reservations for its new all-electric Whip LiFe today, with the Atlanta-based car maker's CEO offering a hint at how competitive the market for mini-electric cars is about to become.

"We are on schedule to be the first company to offer an affordable all-electric car in the U.S.," Mike McQuary said. "Other auto companies have made announcements of the



upcoming availability of their electric cars, but for the most part, their cars are being released in only a few cities, and in limited quantities."

That seems to be a shot at the [Smart ForTwo ED](#), made by Daimler, which will be available this fall for leasing fleet customers in only a handful of metro areas (not including Atlanta), and [THINK](#), a Finish company that's planning to sell in a limited number of cities this fall. THINK plans to begin manufacturing vehicle in an Indiana plant next year.

Wheego, which manufactures its cars in California, already sells the Whip through a small network of dealers, but it's only a "neighborhood" vehicle, with a top speed of 35 mph and a range of just 50 miles. The Whip LiFe is more of a "city" vehicle; it tops out at 65 mph and its lithium battery pack gives it a range of 100 miles.

The LiFe lists at \$32,995. But a federal tax rebate of \$7,500 and a Georgia tax credit of \$5,000

would bring the cost to just over \$20,000. Plus, the company notes Congress is considering an addition \$2,000 electric vehicle incentive. Reserving the vehicle requires a \$100 deposit to be placed at the company's website, www.wheego.net.

"LiFe will ship to customers first-come, first-served across the U.S. beginning in September," McQuary said, "and everyone who makes a reservation will be driving their car before the end of the year."

McQuary also pointed to the BP oil spill as a silver lining for the company: "I think the public understands that the time has finally come to make electric vehicles a part of everyday life. The recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has certainly highlighted that it's time for a change."

Wheego Electric Cars Previews Full-Speed Model

January 27, 2010

Wheego Electric Cars, manufacturer of all-electric cars, today announced it will unveil a prototype of its full-speed version at the Washington Auto Show January 26, 2010.

"This car will shake up the landscape of the American auto industry," predicts Wheego CEO Mike McQuary. "At a target price of \$32,000, plus a \$7,500 Federal Tax Credit which brings it down to \$24,500, it is the first affordable all-electric car. This summer, it will be fully crash-tested and highway-ready. Americans are eager to step up to the plate and take charge of our energy independence and address environmental issues; all we have lacked is the right car for the job. In mid-2010, Wheego will answer that call."

The Full-Speed Wheego Whip LiFe runs on Lithium Ion batteries. It is expected to go 100 miles on a charge, and take about 8 hours to charge on a standard household outlet. Faster charging options will be available.

A prototype of the Wheego Whip LiFe will be introduced to the public at the Washington Auto Show. The initial Wheego offering is the Whip LSV, which is available now. The Whip LSV is an all-electric Low Speed Vehicle which can drive on roads with posted speed limits of 35 miles per hour or less. The Wheego Whip LSV is a fully-loaded two-seat compact car with fit, finish and features that compete with any other subcompact car on the market. Features include remote keyless entry, air conditioning, and an MP3 stereo system. The all-electric Wheego Whip LSV runs on sealed lead-acid batteries and can be charged from a standard household outlet. The Low-Speed version of the Wheego Whip will be available for test drives at the Washington Auto Show in the ride-and-drive area.

About Wheego Electric Cars

Wheego Electric Cars is an innovation-driven and environmentally-conscious manufacturer of Electric Vehicles (EVs). Under the leadership of Mike McQuary, CEO and former MindSpring entrepreneur, Wheego Electric Cars has become a leader in the integration of advanced technology components. Wheego Electric Cars is one of the first EV companies to deliver affordable fully capable, street legal all-electric cars for everyday consumer use.

For more information about Wheego, visit the company website at wheego.net.



5 Reasons Your Next Car Will Be Electric

by Jim Motavalli, December 22, 2009

At the end of 2009, electric cars connected to smart grids have become inevitable. Get used to the idea of plugging in before hitting the road.

Take a look at that gas-guzzler in the driveway. Are you ready to wave goodbye in favor of something cleaner, greener and plugged in?

At the end of 2009, there's no turning back: We're going to electrify the world's auto fleet, and soon. I know, I know — besides hybrids, there aren't a lot of green cars on your radar right now. Today, 100 percent zero-emission battery-powered cars are scarce on the ground — there's a motley assemblage of 3,000 of them registered. You can buy a Tesla Roadster if you have a spare \$109,000 lying around. **Wheego will sell you a Whip, which is a battery-powered "neighborhood" car that can be used locally on roads with speed limits below 35 mph.** And there are a few highway-worthy cars on the international market, including the Indian-made Reva, the Chinese-made BYD E6 and the Norwegian Think City.

But despite all this, your next car (or maybe the one after that) will be electric: a hybrid, plug-in hybrid or battery car. That's where the auto industry is going, where the world is going. By this time next year, the picture will be dramatically different, with a host of consumer choices, from the sexy Fisker Karma and the versatile Volt to the ultra-cool Coda.

Gas cars won't disappear overnight, but they will do a slow fade. And here's five reasons why:

1. **Feeling the heat.** The imperatives of climate change mean we'll have to stop burning fossil fuels, especially coal and oil. [The Copenhagen talks](#) did not produce a binding agreement, but trust me on this — one is coming. The successor to the Kyoto talks will be much tougher, and we won't make the numbers without putting millions of zero-emission cars on the road.
2. **Oil peaking.** We may or may not have already reached [global oil peak](#) — the point where oil demand exceeds oil supply. The worldwide recession suppressed demand and gave us something of a breather, but the numbers on oil demand (especially from China and India) in the next decade are completely unsustainable, and everybody knows it.

3. **The smart grid.** We're just starting to optimize our antiquated electric system, but the way forward is clear. Utilities are partnering with automakers to enable the easy charging of millions of EVs at night without adding new plants. Off-peak electricity production and transmission capacity could fuel the daily commutes of 73 percent percent of all cars, light trucks, SUVs and vans on the road today if they were plug-in hybrids, a 2007 study by Pacific Northwest National Laboratory found. What's more, solar car charging is becoming a reality, and that means a 100 percent zero-emissions loop — the answer to any critic who says that EVs get all their power from dirty coal plants. Even today, with 52 percent of U.S. electricity generated by coal-fired power plants, Plug-in America reports that EVs reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and most other pollutants compared with conventional gas or hybrid vehicles.
4. **The better mousetrap.** EVs, on the road starting next year, will be better than gas cars in every way. Forget the idea that they're slow, or that you won't be able to get where you're going. I've driven every EV, and all of them were exciting on the road. Every carmaker is building one, and they know it will be a very competitive market demanding excellence in engineering. BMW tells me that the consumers test-driving its Mini E plug-in quickly got over their "range anxiety."
5. **Plugging in.** You'll have a charging station at home, at work and at play. Starbucks and McDonald's will have them, and so will the big-box store down the street. Car charging will become ubiquitous — offering you \$3 and \$4 electrical fill-ups. Some retailers will even offer 15-minute fast charging free to get you in the door.

For all these reasons and more, your next car will have a plug. And it will be fine, trust me on this.



Wheego Debuts Whip Electric Car in Dealers

by Nino Marchetti, November 2009

Wheego, one of the many electric car manufacturers striving to get their no-emissions electric vehicle into the hands of consumers, recently announced a sort of “dealer network” of locations around the United States in which to sell its first product. The Whip, as it is being called, should now be on sale via some of these independent dealers now.

The auto maker said it had secured 16 locations across the country in which to sell its Whip. Many of them also sell other electric vehicles, so those locations should give consumers a good idea of the variety of selection coming to market. Wheego continues to shop around its EV to other dealerships as well, taking a road show this month and next through the southern part of the country.

The current electric Wheego Whip is classified as being a low speed vehicle, meaning it can drive on roads with speed limits less than 35 MPH. It is said to have interior features comparable to other subcompact cars on the market, seating two people and running off of “sealed lead acid” batteries which can be charged from a regular AC outlet. A “full speed” Whip is expected sometime in 2010.

6 hot electric car start-ups

Excerpted from an article by Peter Valdes-Dapena, November 4, 2009

Each of these carmakers is gearing up to be the next big thing in electric automobiles. Here is how they're charting success.

Wheego



Model shown: Wheego whip

Price: About \$30,000

Power: Electric only

Expected sale date: Summer 2010

You can buy a car called the Wheego Whip now, but it's not what most people would consider a "real car." It's a Neighborhood Electric Vehicle, or NEV. The Whip that is now on the market will only hit speeds up to 35 miles per hour, has a range of about 40 miles on a single charge and costs about \$20,000. All of that makes the Whip well suited for short commutes or running errands around town.

As an NEV, the Whip can legally forgo certain safety features such as airbags, although the basics, like three-point seatbelts, are still required. Additionally, the Whip isn't required to go through the same crash tests as cars that can drive at higher speeds. But Wheego has plans to turn the Whip into a real highway capable car, with a better battery and more safety features. The company has just started crash tests on the new model.



THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

Wheego delivers its first all-electric low-speed car

Oct. 30, 2009

Wheego Electric Cars Inc., based in Atlanta, delivered its first all-electric low-speed vehicle (LSV) to a customer Friday.

Stephen Currie, 41, of Atlanta, is the environmentally conscious type of person the company expects will form its initial customer base. "I did a lot of research and found an electric car would be great for driving around the city. Everything in my life is in a 10-mile radius," Currie said.

A product manager at EarthLink, Currie also has a second car for longer trips and those that require going faster than 25 miles an hour, the current Georgia speed limit for such cars.

LSVs are exempt from most federal motor vehicle safety standards, including crash-worthiness.

Mike McQuary, former president and COO of EarthLink, and his partners were looking for a new idea to invest in and came across a company in Columbia, S.C., seeking funding to develop electric golf carts. Carts didn't excite him, but he began to research electric cars. He remembered that Charles Brewer, MindSpring founder, once owned an electric car and loved it.

"People were passionate about those cars, and then that movement faded," McQuary said. "It reminded me of the early days of MindSpring when people were passionate about the company. I knew early adopters like Stephen would embrace the technology."

McQuary said the challenge was delivering an electric car that would work. "People were skeptical that we could start a car company from scratch; but, again, we did that with MindSpring. We were more concerned about getting a great product and making customers happy."

The team found a Chinese company to provide the chassis and body. Other parts come from throughout the U.S. and Canada, and the cars are assembled in Ontario, Calif.

"An electric car is like a computer. You need great hardware but you need great software as well," McQuary said, pointing out some considerations.

"There's a controller in the front that makes it run efficiently and well," McQuary said. "We had to make the car affordable with amenities like a stereo and Bluetooth connectivity and make it look nice, not weird. We wanted it so that when you shut the door it didn't rattle or sound tinny."

About 16 dealers across the country, including Wheego of Marietta, sell the cars. The company hopes to sell about 500 by June.

The Wheego Whip sells for \$19,995 to \$22,000. Until the end of the year, a \$7,500 federal tax credit will be available for buyers; after that, the credit will become 10 percent of the purchase price.

The car can travel 40 miles without a charge. Recharging takes about eight hours on most outlets, or four to five hours for those purchasing the dual charge option.

Wheego is crash-testing a full-speed electric vehicle that would be suitable for highway driving. Plans are to roll it out by summer with a list price of about \$30,000. McQuary said he expects to sell 5,000 to 10,000 of the full-speed cars next year. A four-seater is on the books for 2011, along with extras such as navigation systems.

"There is going to be an explosion in the development of battery technology and there is a community of drivers who have a pioneering spirit that want this cutting-edge technology," McQuary said. "The green movement is not a fad."



Brian Dean rolls out the first wheego whip electric car sold to its first Atlanta customer Friday, October 30, 2009. The wheego whip is an all electric vehicle sells for \$19,995 and it qualifies for a \$7500 Federal Tax Credit.



The wheego whip is a front wheel drive type, the length is 118.5" and width is 63.2" and height is 63.0". It comes with a fully functional spare tire and charge capable from 120V - 240V.

The Nuts and Bolts of Wheego's Electric Car

by [Chris Dannen](#), Thu Sep 24, 2009

This week I had the privilege of test driving Wheego's low-speed electric vehicle, the Whip, which costs about \$12,500 after a \$7,500 tax credit that expires this year.

The Whip isn't meant for highway duty; it uses relatively short-range lead acid batteries and is designed for around-town driving totaling around 5,000 miles per year. But next year Wheego will roll out a similar car with a highway-ready lithium iron phosphate battery, capable of doing 78MPH with about an 80 mile range. The current iteration of the car does about half that, at a top speed of 25MPH.

The Wheego-branded black case under the hood is "basically a laptop computer," says CEO Mike McQuary, complete with a silver heat-sink originally designed for server PCs. The close-up shots reveal the electric motor (photo #2), connected to the chassis with brass-colored engine mounts.

Also visible: the step-like battery configuration behind the seats. In the highway-speed version of the car, these batteries will be underneath the passenger seats. The vehicle's shifter has three positions: forward, reverse, and neutral.

Forbes

Electric car made 'as logical as possible'

By MURRAY EVANS, Sept. 16, 2009

OKLAHOMA CITY — Turn the key on the Wheego Whip to start the engine, and it sounds like nothing has happened, although it has. Drive it around with the window open and ambient sounds – everything but the engine – fill the ears.

Mike McQuary, the chief executive of Atlanta-based Wheego Electric Cars Inc., said Tuesday he hopes the quiet car is among the vehicles that will help wean the U.S. off of foreign oil. During a presentation of the two-seat car at the state Capitol, he said the company's goal is to bring "real street-going electric cars to the U.S." that also are affordable.

The current top speed of the Wheego Whip is 35 mph, although McQuary said his company is working on a model that should be out next summer that will travel up to 65 mph.

Inside, the car – at 63 inches high and 63.2 inches wide – still has storage behind the seats. It has a stereo system, and air conditioning is an option.

The car has a wheel base of 79.7 inches, which is a little more than 6 1/2 feet. By comparison, the 2010 Honda Civic – a popular subcompact – has a 106-inch wheel base.

The Whip can be charged from a standard household outlet and will run about 35 to 40 miles on a single charge, McQuary said, adding that the 2010 model will be expected to run about 100 miles on a single charge.

Test Drive: The All-Electric Whip From Wheego

By Michael Kanellos, September 02, 2009

It's an all-electric, two-seater car that looks like a smart car. It's not bad, which is a good sign for the industry.



I did not hold up traffic or fear for my life.

Those were two of the more noteworthy – if seemingly unremarkable – facets of a test drive through San Francisco in the Whip, an all-electric car from [Wheego Electric Cars](#). The two-seater, which resembles a Smart Car, kept up with the flow of traffic along the pancake-flat Embarcadero. When I needed to change lanes, it let me accelerate ahead of other cars.

Going up Nob Hill, I managed to accelerate from a standing stop to between 20 to 25 miles an hour on some of the steepest sections and maintain speed.

“Steve McQueen is probably rolling in his grave somewhere,” joked CEO Mike McQuary, a former internet exec, after we realized we were driving on some of the same blocks where *Bullitt* was filmed.

Although those aren't Porsche speeds, I was able to keep an even gap with an Econoline van behind me on one block and catch up to an empty Toyota pickup on another one. I purposely hit a few potholes and only felt a moderate lurch. (A video will come to the site soon.)

While Tesla Motors brought back the concept of electric cars from the dead with its Tesla Roadster, the job of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and oil companies will likely fall to economy automakers like Nissan, Subaru, Mitsubishi who have or plan to release eco eco cars.

With some luck and capital financing, smaller companies like Coda Automotive, Wheego, [Electrovaya](#) and Zenn Motors will be able to participate in the market as well.

Wheego right now sells a low-speed all-electric version powered by lead-acid batteries. It's what I drove. Although the car could go close to 50 miles an hour, it contains a governor that limits the speed to 35 or 25 miles per hour, depending on the state where it is sold.

The company hopes to release a freeway-legal version powered by lithium-ion batteries with a 100 mile range. Two of the initial markets will be California, where surveys indicate that urban drivers want small electric vehicles, and Oklahoma, where the state has passed a tax credit that can go up to approximately 50 percent of the cost of the car, said McQuary.

The low-speed lead-acid car costs \$19,000. Adding lithium batteries will boost the price to \$29,000 before the \$7,500 federal tax credit or any state credits.

Will Wheego make it? It's hard to say. Overall, it felt like a slight step down in performance and handling from my utilitarian second car: a 2004 Nissan Sentra we bought used from Hertz. Still, it felt and drove like a car: It did not scream "golf cart" like some other lower-end electric vehicles I have known. The turning radius was small enough to let me pull a U-turn on a narrow street with a parked car on one side. The Sentra wouldn't have made it.

The brakes also grab pretty well and it is short enough to fit into tight spaces. For urban commuting, this car with a little more power and some further refinements will work fine for consumers. As a city delivery vehicle, it's ready.

The downside? It will be hard to match the performance and handling of the Nissan Leaf. We drove the prototype of the Leaf last year and it definitely had an edge on performance. Nissan has also indicated it will sell the car for around \$30,000. If Nissan can hit that mark, Wheego (and some of the other economy car startups) will have trouble competing. GM's Volt, with a range of a few hundred miles, will only be around \$10,000 more.

It also didn't have the speed or space-age suavity of the three-wheeled Aptera 2e. When the Aptera pulls up, people stop to take photographs and ask question. Barely anyone gave us a second notice.

Then again, when it comes to electric cars, indifference can be considered a good thing.



Plugging in, taking off: Eight electric vehicle startups to watch

Excerpted from an article by Jim Motavalli, July 6, 2009

These are the companies with the right mix of the right stuff — business acumen, a great plug-in product and a marketing plan. Don't be surprised if at least one of these companies becomes as big as (or bigger than) General Motors.

We're in Silicon Valley, and the setting is a nondescript industrial park. The office looks like all the rest, though it invariably has a garage attached to it. This is the scene for numerous electric vehicle (EV) startups, many of them headed by California tech refugees. I hear from them nearly every day now. It's an entrepreneurial field day not seen since, well, the tech startups of the 1990s—which took place in exactly the same place.

The cast of characters and their ranking changes daily, but here is my listing of the eight that I think—right now—are most likely to make it:

Wheego. This Atlanta-based startup makes the whimsically named Wheego Whip, a low-speed vehicle that's not allowed on roads with speed limits of 35 mph or more. Unlike other LSVs, this \$19,000 entry with 55 miles of range is fully finished, with four-wheel discs, air conditioning, a stereo and other amenities that take it beyond golf-cart status. There are reportedly 40,000 LSVs on American roads, but Wheego will soon introduce a fully road-worthy EV and that's when the company could really become a player. CEO Mike McQuary is, like Elon Musk at Tesla, a former investor who liked what he saw. "The Whip is the best electric car in the world," he says.



One Small Electric Car and Its Big Fight for Buyers

By Chris Dannen, July 6, 2009

In the race to build the first affordable electric car, one company is taking an unusual approach: they're not treating it as a race at all. "We don't want to be the first, or the biggest. We just want to be the best," says Mike McQuary, CEO of Wheego electric vehicles

The Atlanta-based startup will begin selling its first electric vehicle, a small, functional buggy called the Whip, this August in a handful of dealerships around the country. It'll cost around \$19,000, minus a newly-revised \$7,500 tax credit just announced by the IRS. Despite its price, the Whip is up against a bevy of capable competitors: fellow startups like Tesla, Coda and Zap, to say nothing of the big boys Nissan, GM, Toyota and Honda.

McQuary has been here before; as the founder of MindSpring, the early Internet service provider, he faced — and withstood — crushing opposition from ISPs like AT&T, IBM and Microsoft. It was back in his MindSpring days that McQuary first came across electric cars, though he says he doesn't have any particular predilection for vehicles. His cofounder at MindSpring, Charles Brewer, had one of the early electric RAV4's that Toyota was test-leasing to customers around the country. Then California's new emissions mandates were repealed, and Toyota took back Brewer's car. It would be years before electric cars crossed McQuary's mind again. (Below, the RAV4 EV, pilot tested in the 1990s.)

In 2000, MindSpring merged with Earthlink; three years later, McQuary left his post as CEO to found a private equity merchant bank with a college buddy. They shopped around for projects, buying a TV station and taking pitches from entrepreneurs. "Then a guy came along who wanted to start a company that would build better golf carts," McQuary says. "We all sort of shuddered, but I went and learned about the industry."

This is the point in the story that is supposed to birth a breakthrough — instead, it was a dead end. The golf cart market, McQuary says, is a "wonderfully managed oligopoly," with three major companies controlling 95% of the market. "I knew there wasn't an opportunity in the golf cart industry," he says, "but I kept veering into research on using modified [electric] golf carts on the open road." Memories of Brewer's RAV4 came to mind. "I remembered that these cars had a start out of the gate, and that people were emotional and enthusiastic about them," he says. "When I first started up MindSpring, I saw that kind of emotional expression. I know that consumer voice, and I thought: I know how to reach and appeal to that passionate base of early adopters."

The lightbulb flickered until he saw the documentary *Who Killed the Electric Car*. The technology, the political climate, and what McQuary calls the "macroawareness" over dependence on foreign oil all convinced him that now was the time to garner what he had learned and start something. "I knew I could make a great electric car, and that consumers would buy it."

The result of his inspiration was RTEV, an electric vehicle company that got its start making electric recreational and hunting vehicles. The original plan, he says, was to begin a

streetcar division housed under the same umbrella company. “Then we realized about a month ago that the recreational division had very little technology overlap with the street division, and the dealer network—which is all powersports guys — didn’t have any overlap with car dealers,” he says. As of late May, Wheego was spun off to become its own entity, with McQuary at its helm.

The pair of cars that are the product of his vision — one “low-speed vehicle” or “LSV ” certified for a round-town 25MPH, and one “full-speed vehicle” capable of highway speeds — are quirky, attractive and well-priced. The Whip, the LSV, is a two-door Smart-car doppelganger that holds two people and goes about 40 or 50 miles on a charge. It gets its juice from a normal three-prong household plug, mated to a normal 110V household outlet, but it can also be hooked up to a 220V outlet for faster refills. A full charge takes six to eight hours.

The Whip is the product of an auspicious deal with Chinese car manufacturer ShuangHuan automotive, which tried (and largely failed) to launch a small, mid-priced gasoline car in Asian markets last year, only to find that the burgeoning Chinese middle class wanted bigger cars. When they were approached by McQuary and his team, they had a body and chassis ready to roll, and no one to sell it to. “We asked them to make about 85 modifications,” McQuary said of the ShuangHuan car. The first “rolling shells” of the Whip will be shipped from China to Ontario, CA by the third week in July; there, they’ll be outfitted with sealed, environmentally-sound lead acid batteries, drivetrains, and motors. After just two weeks of surgeries, they’ll go out to dealers, some of which are traditional car vendors looking for a new product to liven up sales, others of which are specialized EV-only car stores. The first production run will be between 500 and 1,000 cars. (Below, the Whip next to fellow EV the Tesla Roadster.)

The full-speed car, which is powered by a more advanced (and expensive) lithium ion phosphate battery, will go on sale in 2010. Wheego will provide a trade-in program for customers who bought a Whip, and later decided to upgrade to the yet-unnamed full speed vehicle. “We have the best electric car in the world that we’re launching,” McQuary says, touting in particular the car’s fit and finish, city-chic styling, powerful stereo and the optional A/C. “I want those early MindSpring customers to be Wheego drivers,” he says. Whether or not there are enough of those MindSpring early adopters to spread over Wheego and its competitors remains to be seen, but McQuary believes that a toe-hold in the industry is all Wheego needs to build its momentum. “If I can sell five or ten thousand cars, we’re off and running and profitable,” he says. And all environmental ideals aside, it is profitability, of course, that will decide which EVs live and die.

Automobile

Review: 2009 WheeGo Whip NEV & HSV

By REX ROY, July 01, 2009

In photos, you can't tell the size of the 2009 WheeGo Whip. They look tiny — perhaps the size of a Smart ForTwo. In person, all that changes. Regardless of which powertrain is fitted under the Whip's hood, this car is bigger than you expect.

WheeGo will have its Whip NEV (Neighborhood Electric Vehicle) on sale by the end of the summer, and expects the Whip HSV (Highway-Speed Vehicle) to be available Summer 2010.

The idea for building the Whip comes from Internet entrepreneur Mike McQuary. McQuary stands as a true believer when it comes to the electrification of personal transportation. He is directing the low-volume, low-speed Whip towards others like him. The company expects to sell 500-1,000 NEVs per year after the car goes on sale later this summer, and a similar number of HSVs when they go on sale in mid-2010. The number seems reasonable when one considers that 77,000 NEVs have been purchased by Americans in the last 10 years, according to the company.

McQuary approached the business of building electric cars practically. His concept was to apply the best available electric powertrain technology to an existing vehicle that fit the company's ideal for what could become an electrified city car. WheeGo's vehicle would not be a gussied up golf cart or third-world utility vehicle.

Economics were also an issue, and to make the financials plausible, WheeGo considered dozens of options and settled on a car called the Noble. China's Shuanghuan Automobile Company markets the gas-powered Noble for domestic consumption and export.

Unlike the Smart ForTwo, the Noble is a front-engine, front-wheel-drive car. While the general shape of the Noble/Whip is familiar, it's a foot longer than the ForTwo, and the hood/front end is significantly larger proportionally. The Noble/Whip is also four inches wider and a bit taller. Overall, this is a substantial vehicle, as can be seen in the accompanying photo where a Whip is parked next to a 2008 Volkswagen Jetta SportWagen.

For WheeGo, Shuanghuan produces roller chassis; essentially complete cars with no powertrain or fuel systems. The all-steel vehicles arrive stateside with DOT compliant seats, safety belts, glass, tires, and a fully-outfitted interior.

When the chassis arrive stateside, they are trucked to an Ontario, CA assembly facility. To create the Whip NEV, an electric powertrain is installed where the gas engine would normally go. The single electric motor produces 110 lb-ft of torque and a nominal 10 horsepower with 40 peak horsepower. Sophisticated lead acid batteries (12 eight-volt advanced glass-mat sealed cells) are good for real world driving of about 40 miles.

The Whip NEV is speed limited to 25 mph or 35 mph depending on state laws for these vehicles. Charge time is about eight hours from a nearly dead battery pack. Showing a high

degree of ingenuity, the motor drives the wheels through the Noble's five-speed transmission with the linkage locked in second gear. Other gears are left out of the transmission to save weight and lower cost. Brakes are economy-car standards; discs up front, drums in the rear. Weight with the lead acid batteries is around 2500 lbs.

Whip HSVs versions get these major upgrades; a more powerful motor (55 horsepower at up to 3500 rpm), an FE-type lithium battery array, and four-wheel disc brakes with ABS. The higher energy density batteries lighten the Whip by 400 pounds. High-speed versions will be limited to approximately 60 mph. This vehicle's expected range is over 100 miles on a single charge, meaning a typical driver might be able to go 2-3 days without a recharge.

Behind the wheel, the Whip's interior looks like any relatively current Asian economy car (think Hyundai Accent from 2003). The seats offer good support, door panels look modern, and the equipment level is fully up to par. For example, the standard audio system is from JVC and incorporates Bluetooth and MP3 compatibility. Unlike most NEVs, the Whip comes standard with keyless entry, power door locks, power mirrors, and a fully functional HVAC system with optional air conditioning.

The cabin is exceptionally roomy with a surprisingly high seating position. Visibility is excellent. The sizable steel doors have frameless windows with rubber seals. The assembly closes with a reassuring feeling that isn't typical for an NEV — many of which don't even have doors. Cargo room is likewise large. The glass hatch flips up and a steel tailgate folds down. I found it curious that the seats have pockets — they must be units pulled from other vehicles Shuanghuan produces. Batteries are stored under the cargo area floor.

We drove the Whip NEV first. The powertrain is smooth, not like the jerky electric golf carts or other NEVs we've sampled over the years. Unlike these more primitive low-speed vehicles, the Whip's system fully incorporates regenerative braking. The transition between acceleration, coasting, regenerative braking, and braking through the physical braking system is highly polished. WheeGo purchases a capable powertrain controller and then uses proprietary programming to help integrate the motor/generator, batteries, and braking system.

Power is adequate for an around-town car with a limited top speed. Acceleration is quick enough to get you across a street without worrying about cross traffic, but you won't win any drag races. The steering is electrically assisted and has good effort but not any feel. For planned communities and vacation destinations such as Destin, Florida, the Whip NEV could be an excellent transportation alternative.

Switching over to the Whip HSV, it's important to note that production version is still months away, so we sampled an early prototype. It felt much the same as the NEV, just faster. At higher speeds, wind noise wasn't an issue, demonstrating effective door and window sealing. Road noise did increase with speed, but not to an objectionable level. Over 50 mph, the Whip HSV continued to feel like a real car. This is not an insignificant observation for a vehicle in this category, and one that comes from such humble origins.

These humble origins reveal themselves in the suspension tuning. Designed for a vehicle weight of just 1800 pounds, with batteries, both Whips carry more tonnage than the gas-powered Noble. The suspensions also have long travel to cope with China's notoriously poor roads.

Both versions of the Whip would benefit from additional suspension tuning. The ride was too bouncy and understeer causes the tires to howl at the first hint of lateral gs. The understeer

is surprising given the Whip's large radial tires that measure P195/50R15. With these tires, the Whip should have plenty of mechanical grip, and therefore feel sportier. It doesn't feel sporty at all. These ride issues must be solved before NEVs and HSVs like the Whip will be considered as a household's second or third vehicle.

The low-speed Whip goes on sale later this year at an expected price of under \$20,000.

This is real-car money even with the 10-percent Federal tax credit for NEVs.

Representatives from WheeGo know that buyers could buy a Smart ForTwo (or almost two Nissan Versas) for the cost of one Whip NEV. As a company, WheeGo believes that the vehicles they expect to sell will go to a group of buyers who want to drive an electric vehicle and nothing else, so totally rational transportation decision making won't necessarily be at work here.

WheeGo president Jeff Boyd told us in a matter-of-fact tone, "We're not in competition with General Motors or Toyota. We're just in the game, and it's better to be in the game rather than sitting around watching. Our business model doesn't require high volumes to be successful, and we think we're on to something with the Whip."

WheeGo hasn't announced pricing for the high-speed version of the Whip (due next year after crash certification is achieved), but after figuring in a \$7500 Federal tax credit, they hope to have an out the door price in the low \$20,000 range.

While we can't claim to know if WheeGo's expectations are reasonable, our exposure to the Whip did prove that it's a real car with the potential to satisfy a limited number of American drivers.

Business

TO BUSINESS

Atlanta-Based Startup Targets Electric Car Market

by Charles Molineaux, March 17, 2009

Meet Wheego, a product of former Mindspring founder Mike McQuary

When it comes to selling mainstream American consumers on an electric car, Mike McQuary, the CEO of Atlanta-based Wheego Electric Cars, reveals he has infused his creation with a clever special feature. "It's a real car," he says with a smile.

As McQuary, the founder and former CEO of the blockbuster Internet pioneer Mindspring, insists that was the response he got in mid-December when he invited a dozen consultants and prospective dealers to see and test drive the vehicle. A stubby, two-seat subcompact doubtless in perpetual danger of being labeled "cute," the Wheego Whip nonetheless impressed a tough audience in that debut, he says. "These people probably sold 75 percent of all the electric cars sold in the U.S. of the past two years. It almost became comedy repetition. Every single one of them when they got out of the car, they got out and said 'it's a real car!'"

RTEV plans to start sales of the Wheego Whip in May for a sticker price just under \$19,000, minus a 10 percent federal and (in some states sizeable) tax incentives. Claiming a range of 50 miles on a battery charge, the car is – in its current incarnation – classified as a Low Speed Vehicle (LSV) or Neighborhood Electric Vehicle (NEV), restricted by law to speeds of 25 or 35 MPH (The limit varies from state to state) and restricted to streets with speed limits below 35. Over the next year, the company is plotting its truly revolutionary step, upgrading the car to highway ready model, for sale some time in 2010.

RTEV president Jeff Boyd says he already sees interest. "Not only is the market out there for the LSV we're launching in May," he says, "but the number for the full highway speed capable plug-in electric is enormous. In California alone, it would have a market of about 275,000 units."

In late February, the company began soliciting applications for Wheego dealerships, but also heard from people who wanted to buy, not sell, the new all-electric car.

"It was a nice by-product of putting up the announcement of our dealers' network launch," Boyd recalls. "So we decided to go ahead and put up a reservations system. To our pleasant surprise, we've had about 30 inquiries a week."

"In my general opinion that's the best electric car that I've seen ever," says veteran car dealer John Esche, one of the dealers at the Wheego unveiling. After running more than a dozen car franchises over his career, Esche now sells electric vehicles and says he's eager

to get his hands on the Whip. "I've already got cars sold. I've got 10 of the cars spoken for already and I'll be lucky to get five cars in the initial allocation."

The green movement

With environmental consciousness achieving a growing priority in the auto industry (and a new administration in Washington putting a premium on green initiatives) literally dozens of car makers, large and small, are working to get either full blown all-electric vehicles or new gas/electric hybrids onto the market.

"It's anybody's game right now," says Constantine Samaras, research fellow at the department of engineering and public policy at Carnegie Mellon University. "The right vehicle will have to be a mix of something average consumers can see themselves driving and can be afforded. If a company big or small can come up with an aptly-sized plug in hybrid or electric vehicle at the right price, they're poised for success."

McQuary brought his entrepreneurial background to bear on the challenge when he bought a stake in Wheego Electric Cars which, up to now, has made golf carts and electric recreational vehicles.

He reports the company has raised a modest \$2 million over the past two years and is now into a private placement memorandum to raise another \$6 million to pay for the engineering and rigorous crash testing necessary for the Whip to be approved for full speed highway use. "It's really a group of investors," McQuary says, "mostly out of Atlanta, who, I would say, for the most part came from a media or technology background. They understand the possibilities of the car and they got excited. It really is sort of a 'who's who' of what I would consider the best and the brightest folks in Atlanta."

The Wheego Whip takes its body shape from the gas powered Chinese-made Noble, made by Shuanghuan. Wheego imports the raw Noble chassis and, at its California manufacturing facility, outfits the body with an electric motor, dashboard, wiring harness, batteries and interior. Its current AGM "dry cell" lead acid batteries lag the state of the art lithium ion cells, to which McQuary hopes to offer an upgrade in the future.

"I refer to it jokingly around the office as a bit of the United Nations car," he says, with a laugh. "The dashboard is out of Ohio, the engine is out of Wisconsin. The batteries are actually from a Canadian company. The controller is actually manufactured Puerto Rico. It's componentry from all over."

It is to that "fit and finish" that McQuary repeatedly refers, when comparing the Wheego Whip to its electric competitors, and to its more modest cousin, the golf cart. "The slam of the door, the acceleration, the amenities that you expect in a real car. This really is the first car that gives you all of that."

During a exclusive March 2009 test drive, the Wheego Whip offered a sensation much more like riding a very small automobile than a country club toy. It handled city streets so much like a conventional car that it was easy to forget that stepping on the gas doesn't involve any actual gas. Of course, the prototype does feature a few distracting quirks.

The seat belt was unusually difficult to reach and, instead of a conventional lever, the gearshift was just a small switch on the floor that flipped between "forward" and "reverse." McQuary says those and other issues have already been addressed for the Whip's production models.

"We hear this so often," Esche underscores, "a comparison between these units and a golf cart. This is all steel-enclosed, roll-up windows, air conditioning, power windows incidentally, power mirrors ... This is a real, honest to goodness, automobile."

Road ready?

Is an all-electric automobile just one year away from graduating to full-speed highway-ready car?

"There is an awful lot of overpromising and under delivering happening," cautions a skeptical Daniel Davids, Northwest Regional Director with the non-profit electric vehicle advocacy organization Plug-In America. Himself the owner of a Toyota Prius hybrid and a battery powered Toyota Rav 4, Davids says prospective electric vehicle buyers and dealers alike have been repeatedly burned by promises of a breakthrough electric car almost, but somehow never quite, ready for market. "There are a lot of charlatans out there."

Davids wonders if RTEV's determined plans for introducing a low speed vehicle in 2009 and stepping up to a highway ready car in 2010 might be too ambitious. "People arrive and say they've got something which is, today an NEV with lead acid batteries in it. And somehow, within a year, they'll have it licensed and on the road as a full performance vehicle? It's just not doable. Unless someone is throwing hundreds of millions of dollars at the problem, I just don't see something like that happening."

Samaras wonders too. "Anything is possible," he says. "It sounds very aggressive. I'd be cautiously optimistic. In a business where technology is changing quickly you want to get out and kick the tires, in this case literally."

"We've been pretty quiet so far. They don't know us yet," McQuary responds. "We've already got the engineering done. If you take the equivalent of a governor off of the car right now it would run 55 MPH. We're testing lithium ion batteries now. We've got the motor, the drive train and the power pack. It's just a matter of getting over the hurdle of crash testing."

The Wheego Whip does approach a market full of promise from a wide array of competitor vehicles, most of them billed as "just around the corner." "I think we are probably 18 months to two years ahead of who we think are real competition is going to be," says McQuary.

Competition

To name one of the top headline-makers, General Motors Chevy Volt remains Detroit's marquee electric vehicle project. Projected to reach the market in late 2010, the Volt is actually a plug-in hybrid with a promised range of 40 miles on a charge before its onboard gasoline engine kicks in to extend its range. Yet its anticipated price hovers in the daunting range of \$40,000. An increasingly high profile centerpiece in GM's struggle for survival, the Volt took a painful hit from a new study by Carnegie Mellon which concluded that the expensive and heavy batteries it uses to achieve its range keep the car from being cost effective.

Still the Volt has fans even at RTEV, watching to see if GM can pull it off. "Maybe it can't," admits Boyd. "Maybe the larger the company, the slower the change and that's the benefit of small entrepreneurial companies like us. We applaud their efforts. It's great. They've raised the level of awareness with their public relations and the millions of dollars of press they've put out."

For stunning looks, a stunning price and a vehicle that's already available, Silicon Valley startup Tesla has become a darling of the electric vehicle set. After production and financing

complications, its stylish all-electric roadster is in production and hundreds have been ordered already, although its fluctuating MSRP, just increased to over \$100,000, certainly keeps it from becoming a high efficiency zero emissions alternative for more than a tiny niche of the market. The company has repeatedly announced plans for an all-electric sedan with a prototype now scheduled for unveiling in a matter of weeks. No date on when motorists can actually buy one of those and it's expected to cost upwards of \$50,000 to \$60,000.

"The roadster is already there," says Davids. "Phenomenal car. It is done. That's an indication of what has changed. It's a harbinger of things to come."

Here too, McQuary is impressed, but not concerned. "I think Tesla has done a wonderful job of raising awareness. They're making great-looking, really expensive, high-end sports cars. But as far as an electric car for the rest of us, I think we are leading the charge on that."

The 2010 Fisker Karma, too, is a sleek, carnivorous-looking sports sedan, but still a plug-in hybrid with a gasoline burning engine to juice up the batteries for its two electric motors. It's also expected to sell for close to \$90,000. Not exactly a vehicle aimed at the economy-minded.

Farther outside the "box," the Aptera 2e is expected on the market this October. Looking more like a small plane than a car, it certainly doesn't resemble the standard sedan, or even subcompact, most buyers would find familiar. Running on only three wheels, it is legally considered a motorcycle which exempts it from a long list of safety standards but also disqualifies it from federal aid for car makers (unless executives can convince Washington otherwise). Its top speed of 90 MPH and range of 100 miles on a charge offer substantial reassurance for those unsure about the capabilities of an electric. The price, still loosely projected up to \$40,000 could still become an obstacle. There's also the small matter that, in its initial release, it'll only be sold in California.

Among those closer in configuration to the Wheego is the two-seat Th!nk City subcompact from Norwegian car maker Think Global. Formerly owned by Ford, the company is now in talks to develop a U.S. factory. The Th!nk City is capable of speeds up to 70 miles an hour and a range of 112 miles on a charge. Actual U.S. Sales are forecast to start in mid 2010. The target MSRP is somewhere below \$20,000, with the caveat that such a price already factors in federal incentives and doesn't include the lithium-ion batteries, which would have to be leased.

BMW has one option on the road already in the iconic subcompact Cooper Mini, now available as an electric. With a top speed of 80 MPH and a range of 100 miles between charges, the car makes a tempting offer, until you get to the price. Now available only for lease, the Mini EV will set you back \$850 a month, comparable to the rent for a high-end luxury car instead of a subcompact.

Last year's miniature phenomenon, Daimler's gas powered Smart car is also headed to market in an electric incarnation. Bearing a remarkable resemblance to the Wheego Whip (or vice versa) the Smart ED promises a top speed of 70 mph and a range of 70 miles is already being road tested in Europe. It too is expected in the U.S. next year.

But the makers of the Wheego Whip are keeping an especially close eye on a lower profile competitor, Miles Electric Vehicles out of California, Jeff Boyd's automotive alma mater (He used to be its CEO).

Miles may be the first to break through with a new generation highway ready conventional (or at least conventional looking) electric passenger sedan onto the market. The company is still promising its Miles Highway Speed will be available early next year. Looking much like an Accord or a Camry, the Miles Highway Speed will be manufactured in China for delivery to the U.S. and McQuary salutes it.

“We are not necessarily trying to be the first,” he says. “We’re not necessarily trying, as a company, to be the biggest. We are trying to be the best. If we are, we’ll find plenty of customers who like our cars and create a community, almost a cult of drivers. If we can do that, we’ll be very successful as a vehicle.”

Samaras says small, entrepreneurial companies like RTEV can survive and thrive in the new automotive paradigm, but suspects some accommodation with the automotive titans will ultimately have to come.

“I think the little guys are going to be really good at innovations and the big guys are going to be good at selling cars, selling lots and lots of cars,” he says. “There’s got to be a sweet spot in between where they can come together.”

“I take the tack that a rising tide lifts all boats,” says McQuary. “So if there is increasing awareness of electric cars and a neighbor sees another neighbor with an electric car, any brand of electric car, I think it’s going to increase the overall acceptance of them as a viable means of transportation. That just helps everybody.”

Mike McQuary gets ready to launch the Wheego Whip

AMY BARRETT, FEBRUARY 20, 2009

After co-founding Mindspring, McQuary takes over an electric car company

I always want to be part of something i think can have a major impact on society. My friend Charles Brewer founded [Internet service provider] MindSpring Enterprises in 1994. We wrote the business plan together and I came on board the next year. I was president for seven years.

By early 2007 I was a partner at a merchant bank when Bo Huff, founder of Ruff & Tuff Products, came to us for money to expand as a golf cart company. We weren't very interested in that business, but Bo had a lot of great technology. We invested and I became CEO.

The green element is what really drew me to car design, and now I have an appreciation for the old classic cars. I caught the fever late in life. When I was growing up, my dad, who had been a mechanic, was a Ford loyalist. My mom used to say the only competition she had for his affection was a 1955 Ford Mainline. Now I find myself online studying hybrid cars and comparing them. I have a driveway full of electric cars—the Wheego Whip, two rejected prototypes we developed, and a Lexus hybrid. We still have a Honda minivan for the kids.

The Whip is the best electric vehicle in the world. I think the acceleration is going to surprise people. It's a very peppy car. Although I'm the most conservative driver around. Whenever we go on a trip, I volunteer to drive, and my friends say, "No way. Don't let Miss Daisy drive."
