

THE DAILY SENTINEL

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

ALSO INSIDE
LIGHT SNOWPACK
REPORTED SOUTH
OF GRAND MESA
PAGE 3A

Tuesday
March 10, 2020

\$1.00

Your community news source since 1893

EV riders

Road show lets drivers experience gas-free vehicles

By **DAN WEST**

Dan.West@gsentinel.com

A shiny car hood popped open Monday evening in a parking lot in Grand Junction, revealing unfamiliar contents for anyone accustomed to gas or diesel engines.

Actually, there isn't an engine at all.

That car, an all-electric Chevy Bolt, was there as part of the Experience Electric Road Show, an informal "ride-and-drive" event in the parking lot of the Grand Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, which was followed by a presentation by Will Toor, the director of the Colorado Energy Office.

Matt Fowler with Sunrabbit Clean Transportation, a used electric vehicle dealer, brought the Bolt and was showing it off to interested visitors.

The benefits of electric vehicles are becoming more apparent, Fowler said, as people find out they cost less per mile to run and don't require the regular maintenance, like oil changes, that internal combustion vehicles do.

"We had one guy drive over here in a Chevy 3500 and have had a couple who already own EVs, so all across the spectrum," Fowler said about people who attended the event.

Randy Spydell and Debra Clark came to look at the variety of electric vehicles. They said they had test-driven an EV before and were looking to purchase one as their next vehicle. Spydell said reducing carbon emissions from driving was an important factor.

"We're considering an EV car and thought it would be a good opportunity to learn some more about them without the pressure from anyone," Clark said.

Ken Scissors with the Cleantech Business Coalition already owns an electric vehicle. In general he said he sees a lot of opportunity for business in the cleantech sector, as more consumers are concerned with sustainability.

As for his electric vehicle, he said on top of the cost savings and sustainability, the EV is just fun to drive.

"The performance of this thing is incomparable," Scissors said. "You'd have to get some kind of big muscle car to approach it. It's fast, it handles great, it's silent, it's smooth, it's just a hoot to drive."

Grand Junction City Council member Chuck McDaniel came out to see the different vehicles. He hadn't driven one before, but said he might consider it, especially if it were one of the Teslas at the event. McDaniel said he was interested to meet Toor and to check out some of the different types of vehicles at the event. He



Matt Fowler, a salesman and consultant with Sunrabbit Clean Transportation, shows a 2017 Chevy Bolt EV in the parking lot of the Grand Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, 536 Ouray Ave., on Monday evening. The car has a 230-mile range. "The benefits are becoming more apparent," he said, during the Experience Electric Road Show, an informal "ride-and-drive" event.

CHRISTOPHER TOMLINSON /
The Daily Sentinel

See **GAS-FREE**, page 8A ➤

GAS-FREE: More charging stations coming to Western Slope

► Continued from page 1A

said he recently installed solar panels on the roof of his home, and an electric vehicle for local trips could complement that.

“What I was looking for was a small used EV for a dog car frankly,” McDaniel said. “We have two border collies, and we could use it locally for short trips. That’s a real good way to keep the gas emissions (down).”

Toor, who spoke with The Daily Sentinel before the event, said Colorado is doing more to provide charging stations throughout the state.

They are planning to install more than 30 high-speed charging stations along highways, including several in western Colorado, which would allow electric vehicle owners to make longer trips in state.

“The state is also doing quite a bit of direct work to support electric vehicle charging deployment,” Toor said. “The energy office signed a contract with the company Charge Point to build out a fast-charging network along our major highway corridors.”

Toor said his presentation would include information on the state’s goals for reducing carbon emissions and how transportation fits in to that, as well as discussing the state of the electric vehicle market in Colorado.

In the last legislative session, five bills passed that sought to



One of the electric vehicle charging stations in the Grand Valley is located at 536 Ouray Ave.

CHRISTOPHER TOMLINSON/
The Daily Sentinel

improve infrastructure for electric vehicles and aid consumers in adopting the new technology, Toor said.

Those bills include extending state EV tax credits through 2025 and encouraging electric utilities to invest in electric vehicle infrastructure.

This session, Toor said, the state Legislature is considering a bill to allow electric vehicle sales outside traditional dealership structures.

Tesla sells its cars through an online ordering system and, if the bill passes, other new

electric vehicle companies would be allowed to sell that way as well.

Sales of electric vehicles are doing well in the state, Toor said.

Only the West Coast states and Hawaii have higher electric vehicle market share, he said. Toor pointed to the cost savings of owning an electric vehicle, as well as the overall performance of the cars as part of the reason sales were increasing.

“I think increasingly we’re seeing that they’re just premi-

um vehicles,”

Toor said. “Once somebody has actually gotten in an electric vehicle and gone for a drive, they’re pretty likely to want one, just because they are such good cars.”

The Monday event also kicked off a three-month regional electric vehicle sales campaign, with several Grand Junction and Glenwood Springs dealerships offering discounts on select models starting March 16.

For information, visit GarfieldCleanEnergy.org/ev2020.