

Wooden Cross gets new public electric car charging station

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Wooden Cross is the first church in nation to get a public electric car charging station. Courtesy photo. Wooden Cross Lutheran Church has long been involved in the stewardship of the earth through its green-oriented activities.

A committee of congregants meets often to discuss ways in which the church can lighten its footprint on the environment.

Recycling and composting are practiced regularly, and a variety of energy efficient methods are in use.

In addition, several acres of the church's property have been certified a National wildlife habitat.

It's this attitude of "greenness" that prompted Wooden Cross Pastor Woody Carlson to pursue installation of a public electric car charging station.

"It just seemed like a great fit for us," comments Pastor Carlson. "Driving electric cars is a great way to better care for our planet and that is very important to us at Wooden Cross Lutheran."

The church will be the first in the nation to deploy the new standard Level 2 Public Electric Vehicle Charging Station, according to James Billmaier, founding partner of Charge Northwest, an electric vehicle infrastructure advisory and software integration company, and author of "JOLT!! The Impending Dominance of the Electric Car and Why American Must Take Charge" (Advantage Media Group, 2010).

Billmaier, who is also a member of Wooden Cross, says that the church's location, right off of Woodinville-Duvall Rd, and its well-lit parking lot will provide convenient access to drivers wishing to charge their electric vehicles.

"But, it's really due to the church's commitment to the environment that this is happening," he notes.

The project is being funded through a DOE grant given to Coulomb Technologies, Inc., the leader in electric vehicle charging station infrastructure.

The company, which designs and manufactures the systems, received \$32 million to install stations around the country.

The station at Wooden Cross is called the ChargePoint System and it uses the new 240V SAE standard J1772 plug that is compatible on all new plug-in cars entering the North American market starting next month.

It contains embedded cell phone technology which allows the driver to locate and reserve the system from a smart phone or in-car GPS system.

The plan is for thousands of stations to be installed on the Eastside by next year.

"You're going to see them at municipal buildings, commercial businesses, condos, malls, theaters – places where people park for several hours," explains Billmaier. "The new electric cars are making their entrance and at more affordable prices plus the incentive of tax credits, the expectations for sales of these vehicles are huge, especially in this area because of its green orientation."

He adds, "We have the largest electric vehicle association in the U.S. and we drive the most Priuses per capita in the country."

Currently, there are only about 1,000 electric vehicles in the Seattle area, including electric bikes and approximately 100 charging stations.

For right now, the station at Wooden Cross is free, but that situation will most likely change in a few months.

The average rate to use a charger is between \$1 and \$2 per hour, and the average time it takes to recharge a vehicle is anywhere between two and three hours.

Recently, the Volt, Chevrolet's new electric car, made an appearance at Wooden Cross, kicking off its U.S. tour and making history by using a public Level 2 fast charger to fill its batteries for the first time.

The church also celebrated its new station by hosting "Plug-in Woodinville," a public event, which was attended by community residents, as well as state and local officials.

A variety of electric vehicles were on display, along with hands-on charging station demonstrations. There were also information booths from local "clean and green" organizations.

U.S. Congressman Jay Inslee said, "It has been a long time coming, but we can now see the beginning of a future transportation system that can free us from our dependence on foreign oil, create American jobs and help that planet along the way. I am very proud that the people in the district I have the honor of representing are taking the lead in this effort."

In addition to the church, Willows Lodge in Woodinville now features two Tesla Motors Electric Vehicle Charging Stations onsite. It is currently the only hotel in Washington to offer such stations.

Like Wooden Cross, the hotel prides itself on making environmental stewardship an important objective and the charging stations are just one of many sustainable practices implemented at the property.

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