

Turlock Irrigation District might lower rate for plug-in cars

By John Holland

Modesto Bee, Sunday, April 13, 2014

Owners of plug-in electric cars could get a break on power rates from the Turlock Irrigation District — if they charge them at home during certain hours.

The district board on Tuesday will consider letting these customers request “time-of-use” billing, which rewards energy use outside the peak demand period of noon to 9 p.m. on weekdays. TID can provide power more cheaply late at night and in the morning, and it is looking to share the savings with car owners.

The change could mean overall savings of about 5 percent on average for these bills, according to a staff report to the board last week. The rate would be in effect for three years so the district could see how it affects consumption patterns.

TID allows time-of-use billing for commercial, industrial and agricultural customers. This would be the first time any residential users would have access to it.

The staff report said sale records indicate that at least 37 qualifying electric cars have been sold to residents of TID. The district serves about 98,000 power customers in an area from south Modesto to north Merced County and from the lower Sierra Nevada foothills to the hills west of Patterson.

Plug-in electric cars get their power from the grid, unlike hybrids that rely on a gasoline engine to charge the battery. The average charging time for plug-ins is eight hours, the staff report said.

This is not TID’s first step toward easing the way for electric vehicles. In 2011, it helped with the installation of six charging stations at Best Western Plus Villa Del Lago Inn, next to Interstate 5 in Patterson.

Also Tuesday, the board will get its weekly update on watershed conditions and on the start of an irrigation season where Tuolumne River allotments will be roughly half of average.

Fresno State goes green with electric car-charging station

By Hannah Furfaro

The Fresno Bee, Friday, April 11, 2014

Fresno State is planning to give electric car drivers more options to “charge up” under plans announced Friday to build a six-stall charging station on campus.

University officials say the station located west of Save Mart Center will have two quick-charge pumps -- a car's battery could recharge in 20 to 30 minutes -- plus four more for longer charges. It's being paid for through a \$397,000 grant from the California Energy Commission.

Bob Boyd, Fresno State associate vice president for facilities management, said the station will be convenient for drivers and could help boost interest in electric cars.

“The potential of our region is practically untapped,” he said in a statement.

The university's station is scheduled to open in September 2015. Electric car drivers can currently power up at just a few public locations, including the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District office, Schneider Electric, and Lithia Nissan on Blackstone Avenue.

The chargers look a lot like regular gas pumps, but pack an electronic punch in place of regular or diesel fuel.

But don't expect the ease of spending five minutes gassing up and paying at the pump. Martin Baskind, Internet sales consultant at Lithia Nissan, said it could take anywhere from 30 minutes to 21 hours to get to a full charge.

The difference depends on the type of charger a customer uses. The “trickle” charger, for example, is slow but typically free for electric car buyers. Consumers can get a faster charger installed at their home

at the price of about \$2,000, he said. Charging at public stations is free, he said, but usually takes around a half-hour using a quick charger.

"It is a little bit of a time commitment, but there are definitely a lot of benefits to an electric car," Baskind said. That includes no fuel costs and low maintenance: electric cars are built without spark plugs, engine oils, filters and other breakables.

Electric vehicle charging station coming to Fresno State

The Business Journal, Friday, April 11, 2014

Fresno State will be the site of the Valley's newest electric vehicle charging station next year thanks to a \$397,000 grant from the California Energy Commission.

The charging station is scheduled to open in September in Fresno State's Lot P2 located near the intersection of Woodrow Avenue and Matoian Way, west of the Save Mart Center.

When complete, drivers of electric vehicles will be able to use either the four "Level 2" stalls for a two- to three-hour charge or the two "quick charge" stalls for a full charge in 20 to 30 minutes.

Users will also be able to pay by phone using their iPhone or other smartphone.

Other Level 2 charging stations in the Fresno area are located at the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District's office at 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., at Schneider Electric at 3500 Pelco Way in Clovis and at Lithia Nissan of Fresno at 5580 N. Blackstone Ave. Fresno State's will be the first quick-charge stall in the region.

The station helps to meet Gov. Jerry Brown's executive order in 2012 calling for a goal of 1.5 million zero emission vehicles on California's roadways by 2025.