

VALLEY AIR NEWS

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Incentives help Valley residents go electric

If better air quality, nearly nonexistent fuel and maintenance costs, and just doing the right thing aren't enough, perhaps more Valley drivers will get on board with electric cars for another reason, according to Dr. Joan Rubinstein:

"They're the perfect soccer-mom car," she said, wryly.

Dr. Rubinstein and her husband, Dr. Alex Sherriffs, are the proud new owners of a Nissan Leaf, a plug-in electric car. And they're discovering more benefits by the day.

"We've estimated fuel costs will come to the equivalent of \$1 a gallon. Maintenance is next to nothing. And we've been very interested in keeping our emissions down," she said.

Dr. Sherriffs is a member of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's Governing Board. Taking the step to owning an electric car is a natural progression of the Rubinstein-Sherriffs' longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship, and a testament to their deepest values.

"We try to live mindfully of our beliefs, and we believe that we should treat the earth gently," Dr. Rubinstein said. "The electric vehicle is a way to stay involved in the activities that are important to us and the jobs we do."

The jobs the physician couple do include driving around 300 miles per week between their various posts in Fowler, Hanford, Selma and Fresno. Driving range for the Leaf of 70-120 miles per charge is the main reason the physicians opted for the Leaf instead of another electric vehicle.

"Between us, we can get through most of a day's drive [in the Leaf]," which involves switching off cars depending on who's going where, using the Leaf for maximum mileage and emission efficiency, Dr. Rubinstein said. For the shorter trips, such as the three miles to her Fowler office, Dr. Rubinstein may take their 11-year-old Camry or walk.

The couple began exploring the idea of purchasing an electric car after Dr. Sherriffs attended a plug-in electric vehicle workshop

at the District's Fresno office in March. "We thought about it very carefully, and it's exceeded our expectations," Dr. Rubinstein said.

There are also other benefits they keep discovering, after owning their car for a little over 1,000 miles, such as the realization that the purchase of an additional, not-inexpensive charger was unnecessary. "A standard charger that goes into our wall outlet will give us a substantial charge," Dr. Rubinstein said happily. It typically takes about 12 hours to fully charge the battery.

Besides the fuel savings, an electric car makes maintenance almost as archaic as gasoline. Tires need to be rotated every 7,500 miles and the battery needs to be checked each year. But no oil changes or tune-ups are required. And the electric battery is just part of the vehicle's alternative energy package. A photovoltaic cell on the roof of the car powers the accessories, including power windows. And it's got "all the bells and whistles: GPS, satellite radio, Bluetooth." It seats five. "You drive it like a regular car."

Although the car lists for \$36,000, with District and state cash incentives and a hefty federal tax credit, the bottom line price can be more than 30 percent less. All of which makes doing the right thing for air quality even more attractive.

Another electric vehicle incentive workshop like that attended by Dr. Sherriffs in March, will be held at the District's Modesto office in July. Presentations by the Valley Air District, the California Center for Sustainable Energy, the Modesto Irrigation District will address the electric costs associated with owning electric vehicles, and electric vehicle owners will discuss their experiences with EVs.

Dealers and electric vehicle owners will have a variety of cars on display for attendees to get a close-up look and feel for the EVs that are now on the market.

The workshop will take place from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Saturday, July 21, at 4800 Enterprise Way. It's free and open to the public. Lunch is included and preregistration is required at:

www.energycenter.org/cvrip-events.

For additional questions, call 209-557-6472.

2012 FOR Video REEL Contest

District announces 2012 video contest finalists

The District received high-caliber entries for its fourth annual For Reel Video Contest, which encourages creative student videographers and their teachers to illustrate an aspect of living a Healthy Air life. The District selected the top video from three age groups, each of which will receive an iPad 2. This year's finalists are:

- K-8: Sophia Breedlove, Fresno
- High School: Andrew Beard, Bakersfield
- College & Teachers: Antonio Garcia, Bakersfield

The Grand Prize winner's video will be aired on a local TV station, and they will receive an additional \$100 iTunes gift card.

"It's inspiring to see these individuals showcasing their efforts, working towards healthier air, one small change at a time," said Jaime Holt, the Valley Air District's Chief Communications Officer.

The annual contest ran from March to June of this year. Participants were asked to create a 30-second video illustrating this year's theme, "Healthy Air, Healthy You." Entries poured in from all over the Valley, demonstrating the simple lifestyle changes Valley residents are making for improvements in air quality.

To view the three winning entries and vote for your favorite, visit www.healthyairliving.com. Viewers may vote as many times as they want. Voting will close on Thursday, July 5, 2012 at 5 p.m. The winner will be announced Monday, July 9 before 5 p.m.

The contest grand prize was sponsored through a generous partnership with the San Joaquin Valley Citizens Advisory Group of Industry and Valley Clean Air Now.

For additional information on the contest, call the District Outreach and Communications office at 559-230-6000.

