

# The Scoop on Electric Cars

Four models of the new wave in automobiles are examined.

by Daniel Tait  
Community contributor

If you've driven around lately you may have noticed quite a few hybrid vehicles. The Toyota Prius has become a mainstay even though when it launched many predicted its failure. Have you noticed any electric vehicles like a Nissan LEAF or a plug-in hybrid like the Chevrolet Volt around town? Maybe you're holding out for the Tesla Model S. Who could blame you? But for the vast majority of us, we wonder if an electric or plug-in hybrid car is even worth it. Let's find out!

• Nissan LEAF – All electric; Battery range - 84 miles; Price after federal tax incentive - \$21,300 - \$37,340

• Chevrolet Volt – Plug-in Hybrid; Battery range - 38 miles; Conventional fuel economy - 37 miles-per-gallon; Price after

federal tax incentive - \$27,495

• Chevrolet Spark EV – All electric; Battery range - 82 miles; Price after federal tax incentive - \$19,900

• Tesla Model S – All electric; Battery range - 208-265 miles; Price after federal tax incentive - \$59,900 - \$69,900

But what about operating costs? According to Popular Mechanics, a car with an internal combustion engine that gets 25 mpg will require \$1,800 in gasoline at \$3 per gallon, over a year of driving 15,000 miles, which is about \$0.12 per mile. With the cost to charge the LEAF at \$0.11 per kilowatt hour—the national average but about 2 cents higher than North Alabama—the LEAF will require \$396 in electricity over a year of driving 15,000 miles, which is \$0.026 per mile, or a savings of about \$1,400 per year. The savings in North Alabama would be even higher!

So the answer is yes! You just have to find the car that fits your needs. Most people take a variety of factors into account when purchasing a new car from the price point and its fuel economy but also the look and feel of the vehicle. One key reason that the Tesla has done so well in the luxury market is that it is simply a beautiful car and people wanted to buy it. As public charging stations become more prevalent and battery prices continue to fall, EV sales will keep climbing.

*Daniel Tait is program manager at Nexus Energy Center.*

## BY THE NUMBERS Daniel Tait provides mpg equivalent for electric cars.

NISSAN LEAF

115

Body made from recyclable materials.

CHEVY VOLT

98

Equipped with lithium-ion battery.

CHEVY SPARK

119

Kelley Blue Book's Coolest New Car 2013.

TESLA

89

No gas means zero emission.

## CHARGING IS AVAILABLE North Alabama Locations

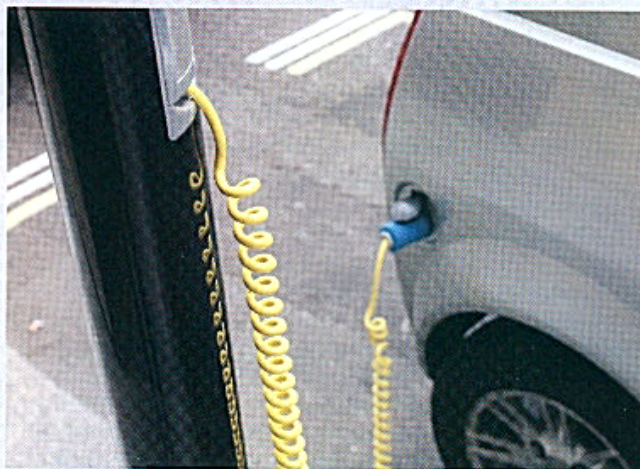
Energy.gov lists several locations in North Alabama that offer charging stations for electric automobiles:

- Redstone Energy Park, 3615 S. Memorial Parkway, Huntsville, offers two Level 2 chargers. Call 888-998-2546.
- Landers McLarty Nissan, 6520 University Drive NW, Huntsville, offers one Level 2 charger. Call 256-837-5752.
- Lynn Layton Nissan, 2402 Highway 31 S., Decatur, offers one Level 2 charger. Call 256-274-4235.
- Jerry Damson Nissan, 248 Cox Creek Parkway, Florence, offers one Level 2 charger. Call 256-381-0525.

—Evan Carden



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Plans are to increase the number of Level 2 charging stations across the U.S. as the demand for them increases.

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