

Is it a truck? Is it a trike? Whatever it is, it's a load of Fun

Zap Xebra is great for saving money and getting attention

By Kirsten Crocker
Staff Reporter

Greg Cappetto and Candace Guerrero recently purchased a Zap Electric Truck, a three-wheeled oddball of a vehicle that runs entirely on electricity. "Weird but sustainable," offers Candace, a faculty member at CNM, although the two confess that they "love being gawked at!" as they are frequently stopped for photographs and find that children especially love the futuristic exhibition.

The vehicle, classified as a three-wheel motorcycle, is at first glance intriguing and aesthetically pleasing. After a closer inspection, one realizes that the "trike" is compiled of surprisingly few components for being a mode of transportation for the future; much less so than its noisy, internal combustion counterparts. After Greg eagerly offered a test drive, the result of his starting the vehicle was shocking; there was complete silence. As one stood behind the vehicle and inhaled, one was struck with the lack of a tailpipe, of exhaust. The air almost tasted cleaner, knowing that this bright orange contraption was in no way contributing to the pollution plaguing the planet.

The drive was surprisingly stable and serene, with the vehicle moving more quickly than expected. As the Xebra made turns it sounded like something you would hear on "The Jetsons," sort of like

a bubble machine. The vehicle does not have air conditioning, a fact that doesn't bother Greg since A/C uses a significant amount of energy; he simply rolls the windows down. To keep warm Greg uses the heater in morning when he's charging the vehicle to avoid depleting the batteries, although a separate heating addition can be purchased for colder climates such as the Midwest and Canada.

The couple had planned to purchase a newer, more environmentally friendly car to replace one of the two they currently own, but didn't want it to run on gas. The two were originally considering purchasing a hybrid vehicle, though as Greg states, hybrids still get around 32 miles to the gallon in the city. The solution presented itself at the Albuquerque Solar Fest in the form of a ZAP Authorized Dealer. Already green enthusiasts, the couple saw the purchase of the ZAP Electric Truck as a big step in the direction of an eco-friendly existence.

The Xebra is limited to a top speed of 40 mph (though the couple asserts that it's closer to 30-35 mph), and a range of up to 25 miles per charge. The vehicle is powered by six lead-acid batteries, with each recharging to 80 per cent in two hours. The truck has a steel frame and weighs in at 3,000 pounds with the battery pack and has a weight capacity of approximately 500 pounds, passengers included. The measurements are roughly

11.5 feet long, 4.5 feet wide, with a height of 5 feet.

ZAP is a leading brand and distribution portal of advanced technology vehicles, and works to serve the growing and underrepresented environmentally conscious consumer seeking fuel efficient vehicles. With egregious oil costs, heightened environmental awareness and an increasing concern with the effects of global warming, climate changes and economic pressures, Greg asserts that, "the time is ripe for a green revolution."

Greg and Candace estimate that the Xebra costs \$15,000, an estimate that includes an extended battery package. The two live close to work and drive less than 15 miles a day; even so, they've managed to cut their monthly gas costs to less than \$0.50 on their electricity bill to fill up a charge. Although the vehicle is a three-wheel, it is insured by State Farm as a regular car, simply because insurance companies are still working on mapping out rates that include new-age vehicles such as the Xebra. However, Progressive insurance will update their rates in March of 2009, classifying such vehicles as three-wheels with rates all their own.

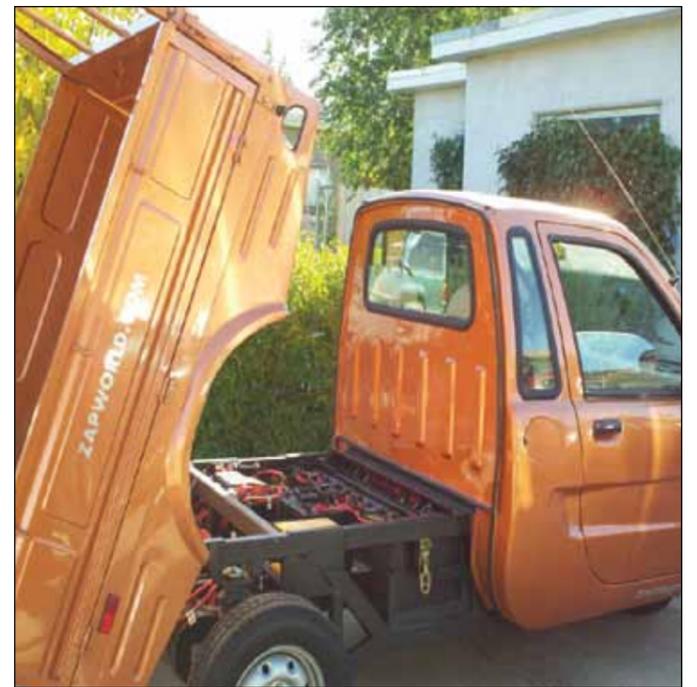
Greg and Candace happily affirm that maintaining the vehicle is simple, as it has no major components. Greg is especially excited about the dump truck feature on the truck, as well as the fact that the brakes are much less complex than gas-

powered vehicles. Greg asserts that the most important part of maintaining the vehicle is keeping an eye on the batteries, which can be monitored independently and replaced one at a time.

The couple intends to convert the six lead-acid batteries to lithium-ion batteries, a transition that will increase range and speed and will further reduce environmental impact.

The couple intends to sell one of their other vehicles once Progressive updates its rates next year, as they plan to keep one vehicle for long-range travel. The two are excited to be one of the first to own a Zero Emission Vehicle in the area, and look forward to a time when they can charge their vehicle at charging stations similar to those found in Canada and California. Another perk of owning such a vehicle is that owners may park at meters for free to reward those who have purchased hybrids (or better!); one simply has to write to the city's department of transportation for their permit.

Although New Mexico's electricity is generated from coal plants, even after counting emissions from electric generating plants, Xebra Trucks produce 98 per cent fewer pollutants than gas cars. The compact and affordable electric vehicle can be recharged at any electrical outlet with a standard, three-pronged plug.



Lead-acid batteries under the bed power the truck.

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Greg Cappetto and Candace Guerrero attract plenty of attention when they drive their new Zap Electric Truck.