

## Small Businesses – Drivers for Electric Vehicle Charging Growth

“If you build it, they will come,” Steve Harris of Star One Credit Union stated about small businesses adding car charging. Two years ago, Star One added a Level 1 and Level 2 charger to serve three employees’ plug-in electric vehicles. Last year, Star One added an additional charger because more employees bought PEVs. Star One’s two charging stations, which can serve eight spaces, now have six cars charging on a daily basis and two more that visit twice a week.

During a June webinar, the Plug-In Electric Vehicle Collaborative and CoolCalifornia addressed basic information about PEV charging for small businesses. According to PEV Collaborative’s Lisa Chiladakis, “Offering PEV charging is attractive to employees and customers. It also greens the company image and can contribute to LEED certification.”

Judy Nottoli, an ombudsman with the California Air Resources Board, helps small businesses reduce their carbon footprint. Judy also runs the CoolCalifornia Small Business Awards Program, which recognizes 15 small businesses each year for their energy-cutting measures, including PEV adoption. [The Small Biz Toolkit](#) encompasses money-saving ideas, case studies, listings of incentives, and financial resources.

Almost 140,000 PEVs are on the road in California, with 3,000-5,000 new vehicles sold every month. According to the Center for Sustainable Energy, most people purchase a plug-in vehicle to save money on fuel costs. Reducing environmental impacts and gaining access to HOV lanes are also motivating factors. Home is the most common charging location, “but we see that changing,” Lisa said. “With more than 20 plug-in vehicles on the market and more coming every year, PEVs are moving out of the early adopter market. We expect to see more people charging in public. They will choose to work, shop, eat, get a haircut, or be entertained while their car is recharging.”

Small businesses would likely install a Level 1 or Level 2 charger, as Star One did. A Level 1 charger provides 4-6 miles of range for every hour of charge; a Level 2 provides 16-24 miles per hour. Considerations for which level and where to install are largely based on who your drivers are. Star One installed charging for employees, and a Level 1 in the employee parking lot was a good fit. Star One also decided to make charging free for employees, but other businesses have decided to charge a small fee.

To help small businesses with the costs of installing, maintaining, and operating a charger, the California Pollution Control Financing Authority introduced a new financing opportunity funded by the California Energy Commission, [The Electric Vehicle Charging](#)

**Station Financing Program.** As Jason Bradley explained, “Small businesses can go to a participating lender and borrow up to 100 percent of the cost of design, development, purchase, and installation of qualified electric vehicle charging stations.” At the end of 48 months—or sooner as the loan is repaid—the borrower receives a rebate of 10 percent of the loan amount, with an additional 5 percent available for projects in multiunit dwellings or in disadvantaged communities. Lenders are protected from defaults through a loan loss reserve. “We anticipate that with access to capital and the rebate, more small businesses will be in the position to install a charging unit,” Jason said.

California is committed to putting 1.5 million zero-emission vehicles on its roads by 2025, and is coordinating nationally to increase the number of ZEVs. Business owners who install charging today are helping to pioneer a transition to a cleaner, energy-efficient future while greening their image and attracting customers who may be drawn to do business with them.

For more information and to see the slides from the webinar, please visit [http://www.pevcollaborative.org/webinars\\_2015](http://www.pevcollaborative.org/webinars_2015)