

# Watt's Happening? #140

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## We test drive the Toyota Prius Prime



*Kieran Dueck of Dawson Creek happily charges his new Toyota Prius Prime plug-in hybrid at the Peace Energy Co-op solar EV charging station. The Prius Prime has the best of both worlds: long-distance driving on gasoline, and up to 40 kilometers on pure electric.*

**E**lectric vehicles are coming on fast, and as far as our carbon-choked planet goes, it can't be fast enough.

Most studies show that about one third of our climate-changing carbon emissions come from transportation. That includes airplanes and transport trucks, but mostly it's just you and me driving around.

A conventional, run-of-the-

mill gas or diesel powered vehicle will release into the atmosphere it's own weight in carbon every few months. A fully electric vehicle will release none. Zero. Plug-in gas/electric hybrids, almost zero.

The good news is that electrics are coming on fast, and they will be cheaper to run and maintain, much higher performance, more reliable, and safer than anything on the road today.

Ten years ago, there were only 430 electric vehicle (EV) chargers in the United States, and the Tesla Roadster was the only EV in production.

Today the U.S. has 47,000 chargers scattered across the states, 25 different EV's and 26 plug-in hybrid EVs to choose from. Plans are for 300,000 chargers over the next 5 years, and hundreds of new electric models are entering the

market as we speak. The EV revolution has definitely begun.

## TOYOTA PLUG-IN HYBRID

The solar-powered EV charging station at the Peace Energy Co-op offices in Dawson Creek (it's free!) continues to attract an increasing assortment of electric vehicles and the interesting people who drive them.

The latest was Kieran Dueck with his Prius Prime, the new Toyota plug-in hybrid. Kieran is a Product Advisor at the Toyota dealership in Dawson

of both worlds.

"The Prime has the best fuel efficiency and lowest emissions of any Toyota to date," explains Kieran. "When on gas, it gets 4.4 l/100 km. When you combine both the gas mileage and the electric, for an average driver it works out to about 1.8 l/100 km. That's amazing."

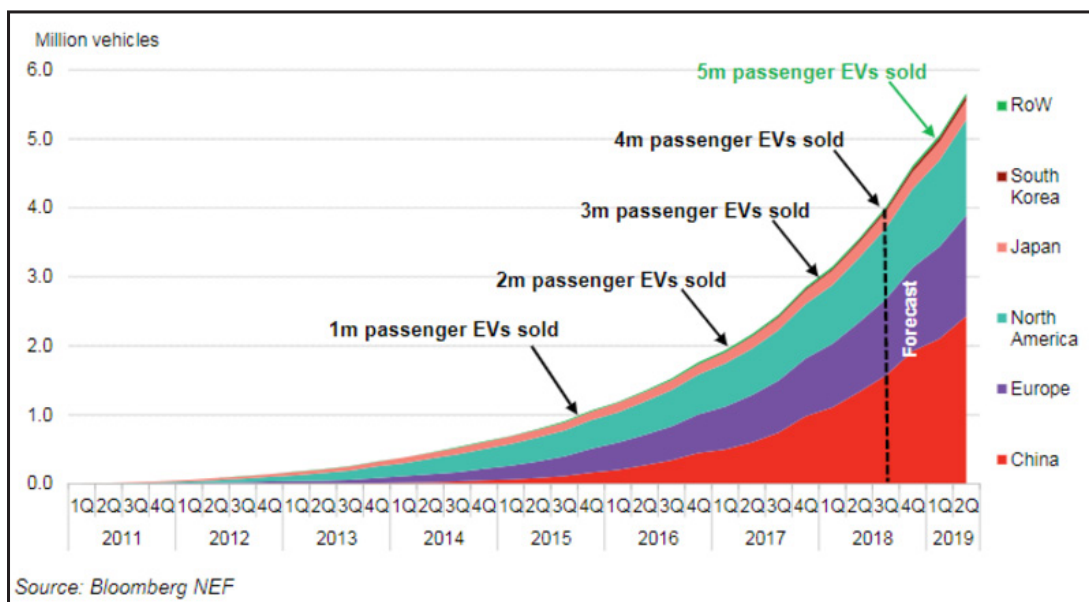
Performance? "Just as quick as one of our top end sports cars. It will accelerate up to 120 km/hour very quickly on pure electric, and the power boost that electrics are famous for is always there when you need it, even when you are travelling long distance on gas.

It's the perfect combo of sporty handling and super fuel economy."

Cost? In the \$33,000 to \$39,000 range, depending on extras. Not bad, plus there are rebates.

## REBATES

BC is one of the only three Canadian provinces to offer rebates for the purchase of an electric vehicle. Rebates of up to \$5,000 are available for battery electric vehicles,



Creek, and he let me take his new Prius for a test drive: impressive, powerful, luxurious and beautiful.

"My primary motivation was fuel economy," says Kieran. "With a 40 kilometer range on pure electric, 90 percent of my day-to-day driving will cost me almost nothing."

The regular Prius is already famous as a super-fuel efficient, ultra-low carbon emission vehicle. Now Toyota has added a bigger battery, giving the Prime up to 40 kilometers on electricity only, and the ability to charge up at any electrical outlet or any EV fast charger.

The Prime seats four, with a lift back and back seats that fold down for a large rear cargo space.

## BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

When the electric range is used up, the Prius Prime automatically switches to gas power, so the "range anxiety," often associated with pure electrics, is eliminated. A plug-in hybrid like the Prime has the best

and up to \$2,500 for plug-in hybrid EVs like the Prius Prime. When combined with the SCRAP-IT program (which offers a good price on your old gas or diesel beater), total savings on the purchase of an EV could be up to \$11,000.

Earlier this year, BC also announced three new rebates for the purchase and installation of electric vehicle chargers for homes, residential complexes and workplaces. Any electrical outlet will charge one of these vehicles, but these special chargers will speed up the process a lot.

Presently there are about 1000 charging stations in BC, including six public ones that I know of in Dawson Creek.

All-electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids like the Toyota Prius Prime are coming on strong because they make sense. They have better performance and comfort, they cost less to fuel and maintain, and they greatly reduce the carbon and pollution footprint of everybody who drives one.