

NEWS RELEASE

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ELECTRIC CARS GIVE NEW DIMENSION TO WORLD OF WHEELS CUSTOM SHOW

Back in 1915 electric-powered automobiles were all the rage for Americans. In fact, there were more electric cars in the United States at that time than there were cars with internal combustion engines.

So, what happened? Why did the fledgling auto industry decide to forgo batteries and olms in favor of pistons and gasoline?

Would you believe – electricity?

"At that time internal combustion engines were limited to what a person could hand crank in order to get them started," said Donald Karner, president of Electric Transportation Engineering (eTec) Corp. in Phoenix. "Once they invented the electric starter, enabling anyone to start the motors, that opened the door to larger, heavier and more powerful engines and that's what the public wanted."

The rest, as they say, is history, and part of that history will be on display during the 32nd Annual CARQUEST World of Wheels Jan. 5-7 at the Phoenix Civic Plaza.

Karner's company, which manufactures the SuperCharge™ System, a rapid battery charger that features an energy flow up to 400 amps per hour (15 minutes for the standard 48-volt golf cart), will show a 1915 Detroit Electric car with unique tiller steering, which was popular in the early part of the century.

(more)

Only Add: Electric cars

In addition to the Detroit, eTec's display will include conventional, modern-day battery-powered electric vehicles such as a Chevrolet S-10 pickup, an Indy-style racecar, and a Model T Ford replica that doubles as a golf cart.

Karner says the interest in today's electric vehicles, which don't need to be charged as often and can be charged much faster, is growing and he estimates there are approximately 6,000 road-legal electric cars in the state, plus many golf carts, airline service vehicles, boats, neighborhood vehicles and other applications.

"Currently we have 39 regular charging stations all over the Valley for electric vehicle owners, plus a number in the garages of electric car owners," said Mark Carman, eTec's national accounts manager. "Plus we have 11 public and private SuperCharge™ systems on line."

Although the World Of Wheels specializes in customized and nostalgic type vehicle displays, the electric cars and the display fit right in, according to show producer J. R. Larivee.

"The battery-powered vehicles are certainly customized, although the changes are all under the hood for the most part," said Larivee. "As far as the 1915 Detroit is concerned, that's nostalgia at its best."

More than 500 vehicles will be on display during the World Of Wheels, including the Cadster, judged America's Most Beautiful Custom Car; custom motorcycles, the famed Ala Kurt II, classy rods and a personal appearance by Paul LeMat, the guy who drove the yellow coupe in the movie classic "American Graffiti."

Show hours are 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Jan. 5, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Jan. 6 and 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Jan. 7. Admission is \$11 for adults, while children under 12 will be admitted for \$4. Discount coupons worth \$2 off the adult admission are available at all CARQUEST auto parts stores.