



Planning for
Greater Akron

The AMATS Quarterly

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Get ready! How you go from Point A to Point B is about to change

With the price of gasoline hitting new highs, alternative-powered vehicles are getting a new look from motorists and fleet operators. Don't be too surprised if the next time that you're kicking the tires on a dealer's lot, that they're attached to a vehicle that's powered by electricity or natural gas instead of gasoline.

AMATS, The University of Akron, the city of Akron and FirstEnergy are working together through *Project Get Ready* to bring Plug-in Electric Vehicles (PEVs) to the Greater Akron area's garages.

Project Get Ready is a national collaboration of industry, education, non-profit groups and governments headquartered at The Rocky Mountain Institute in Denver, Colorado. The institute's goal is to move the United States forward in electric vehicle transportation readiness to promote energy conservation and economic competitiveness. The institute recently identified Akron as a *Project Get Ready* community clearing the way for the city to be selected by the Ohio Department

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GETTING READY: Plug-in Electric vehicles (PEVs) such as the Nissan Leaf, shown above, are expected to roll into area showrooms by next January. *Project Get Ready* is a national initiative to help communities such as Akron have a successful PEV rollout.

Greater Akron area gets ready for roll out of electric, natural gas vehicles

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of Transportation as one of the two lead cities – along with Columbus - to begin developing a PEV infrastructure readiness strategy in the state. The *Project Get Ready* designation was the culmination of several months of work by AMATS, Akron's Department of Economic Development, FirstEnergy, The University of Akron, and the Ohio Transportation Consortium (OTC). (AMATS filed the application on behalf of the group to the institute.)

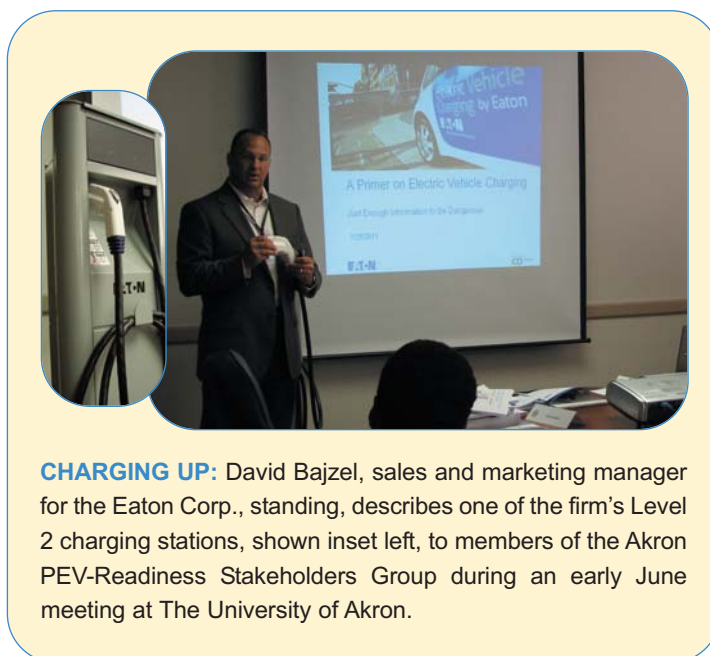
Ellen Perduyn – the manager of corporate and foundation relations for The University of Akron Foundation - says that the groups involved with securing the designation did so with one goal in mind: Getting the Greater Akron area ready for electric vehicles. Click [here](#) to hear Perduyn.

Dr. Ping Yi - the director of the OTC and a civil engineering professor at The University of Akron - says that the area is ideally positioned to be a leader in PEV promotion given its population and location. Yi explains that the area, together with the neighboring counties of Cuyahoga, Mahoning, Medina and Stark, represents 25 percent of the state's total population. This population coupled with the area's extensive interstate system means that many would-be PEV drivers are within acceptable driving distances to use electric vehicles on a practical basis. This situation will do much to reduce the "range anxiety" that many consumers have regarding electric vehicles, Yi explains. Click [here](#) to hear Yi.

Consumers will soon have a number of electric vehicles from which to choose. One of the best known models, the Nissan Leaf, is expected to be available in the Greater Akron area by next January, according to Terry Metcalf, the executive director of the Akron Area Auto Dealers Association. The Leaf will have company in the marketplace in the form of vehicles such as the Chevy Volt, the Ford Focus Electric, the Mitsubishi i-MiEV, the Toyota Rav4 EV, and the Coda EV.

With the cost per charge for 1 kilowatt hour hovering at about 10 cents, the estimated cost to power electric vehicles ranges from lows of \$1.60 per charge for the Volt and i-MiEV to a high of \$3.40 for the Coda, according to figures provided by Yi. In anticipation of new charging stations, FirstEnergy is reportedly preparing the region's electrical grid to handle the added demand of charging vehicles by its six million customers.

Electricity isn't the only clean power source for vehicles that's sparking interest among vehicle operators. Compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) have long been tapped as a clean power source



CHARGING UP: David Bajzel, sales and marketing manager for the Eaton Corp., standing, describes one of the firm's Level 2 charging stations, shown inset left, to members of the Akron PEV-Readiness Stakeholders Group during an early June meeting at The University of Akron.

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by many operators for years. METRO of Summit County has operated a CNG fueling station for its bus fleet since 1996. This year alone, the AMATS Policy Committee has approved funding for the purchase of 11 large CNG buses by METRO.

With gasoline prices surging, the interest in natural gas is beginning to spill over to the public at large. In early June, the price for a gallon gas equivalent (GGE) of CNG was \$1.80 in Ohio compared to about \$3.69 for a gallon of gasoline. (The United States sells CNG in GGEs, which is the same "energy" as in a gallon of regular liquid gasoline.)

Natural gas is an abundant domestic fuel and is relatively immune to price fluctuations due to global pressures. Eighty-seven percent of the world's supply of natural gas comes from the United States alone. Stephe Yborra, director of market analysis, education and communications for the Clean Vehicle Education Foundation/NGVAmerica, says that new technologies have made shale gas economically viable and have increased the nation's supply of natural gas. Yborra estimates that the nation has enough natural gas to last 115 years.



Along with low costs and ample supplies, Yborra says that the air that we breathe is another reason for the growing interest in natural gas. Air quality concerns are pushing many areas, including Northeast Ohio, to consider strategies to promote the use of natural gas among fleet operators. So, why should you care if a school district buys buses or if a trash hauler buys trucks that run on natural gas? Because developing a fleet market for such vehicles will eventually spur the consumer market, Yborra says. Click [here](#) to listen to Yborra.

Ohio appears to be well on its way to establishing a support structure for natural gas vehicles. With investments from the U.S. Department of Energy and partners across the state, Clean Fuels Ohio (CFO) - a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the use of cleaner, domestic fuels - is working to bring 129 new CNG vehicles and seven natural gas stations to the state within the next year.

Sam Spofforth, CFO executive director, announced in March that two new natural gas stations would be constructed in Northeast Ohio through CFO's Ohio Advanced Transportation Partnership. The stations will be built using a combination of funding from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and local matching sources. Cleveland Hopkins International Airport will soon be home to a new public CNG fueling station while the Pilot Travel Center in Seville will soon be dispensing LNG for heavy-duty vehicles. Spofforth says that the stations should be finished by the end of 2011.

As gas prices continue to climb, AMATS officials expect that the agency will continue its efforts to prepare the Greater Akron area for the use of electric, natural gas and other forms of alternative fuel in the coming years.

For more information about PEV Deployment for the Greater Akron area, please visit amatsplanning.org. For more information about Clean Fuels Ohio, please go to cleanfulesohio.org.

Greater Akron area gets up to speed with the Buckeye Traffic system

If good things come to those who wait, then the Greater Akron area has something great to look forward to this fall when its portion of the Buckeye Traffic system should be complete.

Buckeye Traffic provides Ohio travelers with up-to-date information on road conditions, traffic speeds, construction, and other activity affecting roadways managed by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). The department is not only expanding the system into the Akron-Canton area, but is upgrading it across the state with a variety of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies, such as speed sensors, monitoring stations and web traffic cameras. Speed sensor information is collected and relayed to the system's web site - buckeyetraffic.org - through a third-party provider. The department's traffic operations center in Columbus assesses this information and provides travel updates through the system's site, dynamic message signs and highway advisory radio stations.



ODOT District 4 Public Information Officer Justin Chesnic says that 18 message signs and 64 web cameras are being installed throughout the Greater Akron area. Signs are operating on state Route 8 southbound at Easton Drive in Akron, Interstate 77 southbound north of Copley Road (state Route 162) in Akron (shown above), and on Interstate 76 westbound at Sandy Lake Road (County Road 89) in Brimfield Township. Additional signs have been installed on state Route 8 southbound at Buchtel Avenue in Akron, I-76 eastbound in Barberton and I-77 northbound in Coventry Township, but are not yet operational. Two cameras, which provide updated web images every three seconds, are operating on I-77 at state Route 21 and on state Route 21 at Ridgewood Road (County Road 83) in Copley Township.

"It's going to be a whole new wave of information that people are really going to appreciate," Chesnic continues, "You're talking about now being able to get on line and do a couple of mouse clicks and see what your commute is going to look like, especially in the winter." ITS technologies improve safety, reduce delays and are cost-effective congestion management alternatives on older urban expressways. Expanding the system to include the Greater Akron area's Interstates 76, 77, 271 and 480 and state Routes 8 and 21 and U.S. 224 - along with roadways in the Canton and Cleveland areas - will cost the department about \$18 million.

AMATS proposed an ITS program for the Greater Akron area in 1999 as the Akron Incident Management or "AIM" Project. Agency Director Jason Segedy explains that the project was proposed as a cost-effective solution to the area's traffic congestion problems resulting from accidents and roadway construction. The agency predicted that it was unlikely that new highway lanes would be built in the city of Akron due to increasing project costs.

"It's personally rewarding to see this finally coming to fruition, but it does provide a sobering reminder of how long these types of projects take to plan, fund and implement," Segedy continues, "\$18 million sounds like a lot of money, but it could have cost savings over the long run in terms of safety and wait times for drivers."

The AMATS newsletter transitions to the web

This is the last issue of *The AMATS Quarterly*. The agency will still offer a newsletter, but it will be published semi-annually. Published by AMATS since 1993, the newsletter will continue to be available in printed and pdf versions, but more of its content will be available on the *What's New* page of the agency website, amatsplanning.org.

Bike? Check! Helmet? Check! Water bottle? Check! Map? Coming soon!

Along with their helmets and water bottles, cyclists in the Greater Akron area will soon have another item to take with them on their journeys: a Bike User's Map.

For more than a year, AMATS has been crafting a map to assist cyclists in planning safe routes for travel. The map rates major roads in the Greater Akron area as Easy, Moderate, Difficult, or Very Difficult based on such conditions as road width, speed limits, and traffic levels. Cyclists will be able to use the map to choose the best routes for them according to their ability.



Development of the map is part of the agency's larger outreach to the area's cycling community. In mid-April, AMATS hosted a series of well-attended public bike meetings in Akron and Kent. Cyclists were asked three questions by the agency: Where do they like to ride and how do they get there? What can be done to area roads and trails to improve their experience? How can AMATS better promote biking in our region?

Transportation Planner Krista Beniston says that it was during the meetings that safety was identified as a major barrier to riding on-road. Click [here](#) to listen to Beniston discuss safety as a project criterion..

The map won't just be a resource for cyclists. The agency, communities and other project sponsors will use it to identify locations for bike-related improvements.

Printed and online versions of the Bike User's Map will be available from AMATS in the coming months. Beniston says that the map will be a key element in the agency's upcoming regional bike plan, which is scheduled to begin development next year. The plan will issue project recommendations for the area.

Federal government green lights Greater Akron area's new TIP

The Greater Akron area has a new \$625 million program of highway, transit and bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects for the next four years.

Spanning Fiscal Years 2012 through 2015, the program sets a priority for preservation of the area's existing transportation system rather than expansion projects.

The latest program provides about \$470 million to maintenance-type projects over the next four years, a near tripling of the previous program's four years of projects. In contrast, funding for expansion-type projects has been adjusted to nearly \$75 million,

which is about half of the total programmed in the old TIP.

Among the program's significant projects are multi-million dollar improvements to the Central Interchange area in Akron and an \$11 million intersection and signal improvement project on East Summit Street in Kent. The program includes construction of The PORTAGE Hike & Bike Trail in Kent and the Freedom Secondary Rail Trail in Akron and Tallmadge.

The program increases investments in the area's bicycle and pedestrian facilities to more than \$13 million over the next several years. This increase is part of the agency's initiative to promote greater regional connectivity. The new TIP is available for viewing on the agency web site at amatsplanning.org.

Project Updates

The following table lists projects that have been awarded between March 17, 2011 and June 23, 2011.

PROJECT	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATES	CONTRACTOR	AMOUNT
Northampton Road - Bridge reconstruction over the Mud Brook tributary in Cuyahoga Falls .	09/2011	Workman Industrial Services - Kent -	\$542,416
Eberly Road - Bridge replacement on Eberly Road over Congress Lake outlet in Randolph Township .	10/2011	Jet Excavating Co. - New Middletown -	\$528,700
ADA Sidewalk Ramps - Upgrade sidewalk ramps to federal Americans with Disabilities Act standards at various locations on states Route 18 and 93 in Akron .	07/2011	Liberta Construction - Akron -	\$276,806
Crain Avenue - Resurfacing of Crain Avenue, from Luther Avenue to Elmwood Drive, in Kent .	07/2011	Chagrin Valley Paving, Inc. - Chagrin Falls -	\$185,144
Hudson Drive - Widening to four lanes of Hudson Drive, from Steels Corners Road to Commerce Drive, in Stow . Project includes turn lanes and signal improvements.	08/2012	Kenmore Construction Co. - Akron -	\$3,983,762
Smith Road - Construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Smith and Riverview roads, in Akron .	11/2011	Karvo Paving Co. - Cuyahoga Falls -	\$627,722
Sandy Lake Road - Resurfacing of Sandy Lake Road, from Meloy Road to Lakewood Road, in Rootstown Township .	08/2011	Tallmadge Asphalt and Paving Co. - Kent -	\$200,520
Glenwood Boulevard - Reconstruction of Glenwood Boulevard, from Liberty Road to California Street, in the Village of Reminderville .	09/2011	Tri-Mor Corporation - Twinsburg -	\$1,295,069
Akron-Peninsula Road - Resurfacing of Akron-Peninsula Road, from Truxell Road to Orchard Street, in the Village of Peninsula .	07/2011	The Shelly Company - Twinsburg -	\$372,055

Community Focus: Green

Community Focus presents information about communities within the Greater Akron area.

Founded – 1809 as Green Township. (Green became a city in 1992.)

Population – 25,699 (2010 U.S. Census Bureau) **Area** – 33.5 square miles

Policy Committee Member - Mayor Richard Norton

History – Between 1809 and 1900, the unincorporated burghs of Aultman, Comet, East Liberty, Greensburg and Myersville were settled within Green Township. The area surrounding the five main burghs was covered by large farms. This area was not only used for farming, but coal mining.

In the 1950s, due to the increase in demand for residential housing, farmers began selling their land to developers for housing subdivisions. The result of the community's residential and economic development led to interest in incorporation as a city as a way to promote orderly growth while preserving the original township. In April 1992, the Village of Green was officially declared a city by the Ohio Secretary of State's office.

More than 1,100 businesses are located in Green. Key employers include Diebold, FedEx Custom Critical, Harry London's Candies, Goodrich Sensors and Integrated Systems and the Akron-Canton Airport.

Transportation Challenges – Green has three Interstate 77 entrance and exit ramps servicing South Arlington, Massillon and Lauby roads. State Route 241 (Massillon Road) extends in a north-south direction and connects with I-77. State Route 619 (East Turkeyfoot Lake Road) extends in an east-west direction in the northern portion of the city. Other major roadways include Greensburg and Mayfair roads and South Main Street.

Green Community Development Administrator Jessica Hyser says that, as the city grows, its leaders are acutely aware of increased traffic demands and are concerned about making necessary improvements to arterial streets that feed I-77 to provide adequate traffic flow and limit congestion. Many of the city's business and industrial parks are serviced by Massillon Road. Green is working to widen Massillon Road, north of I-77 to state Route 619, to ease bottlenecks.

Hyser says that the city is also looking for ways to address its pedestrian mobility and connectivity problem stemming from its early days as a township. These concerns are being addressed by the city in its newer areas, however, older areas do not provide adequate and safe means for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, according to Hyser.

Green continues to invest in its 10 industrial and commercial business parks, which include the CAK International Business Park located near the Akron-Canton Airport. The city and airport are developing Port Green, a continuation of the CAK International Business Park Phases I and II, which will open up an additional 193 acres of industrial land ready for development. In 2010, the city was allocated \$1.3 million in Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds and, in April, the city received more than \$1.8 million in Ohio Department of Development road development funds to extend Global Gateway a mile north from the existing business park to Greensburg Road.

Web site - www.cityofgreen.org



Dates to Remember

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Committee/Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
September 29	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Stow Safety Building
September 29	7:00 p.m.	CIC	Silver Lake Village Hall
October 5	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Martin University Center The University of Akron
October 21	9 a.m.	Annual Meeting	Sheraton Suites Akron/Cuyahoga Falls
December 1	1:30 p.m.	TAC	Stow Safety Building
December 1	7:00 p.m.	CIC	Silver Lake Village Hall
December 7	1:30 p.m.	Policy	Martin University Center The University of Akron

Persons with disabilities needing assistance are asked to contact Billy Soule, Assistant to the Mayor for Community Relations, 166 S. High Street, Room 503, Akron, Ohio 44308, (voice) 330-375-2189, (TDD) 330-375-2345, at least seven (7) days in advance.

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Director - Jason Segedy Editor/writer - Kerry Prater Phone - 330-375-2436 / Fax - 330-375-2275
E-Mail - amats@akronohio.gov Please visit our web site at: www.amatsplanning.org

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