

# EV stations open in Solvang

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The first three stations in what is expected to be a network of public electric vehicle charging stations throughout the county are now open in Solvang.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by government officials and environmental group representatives took place Thursday morning at the Veterans Memorial Building, 1745 Mission Drive, one of three locations in the city now equipped with charging stations.

Parking is free in Solvang, and officials expect motorists will pay under \$2 per hour to charge their cars.

With tourism being the foremost industry in the Danish-theme town, Mayor Jim Richardson said the charging stations are vital to local businesses.

"We are becoming ecologically sensitive of pollution," Mr. Richardson said. "All the businesses here are supporters of the stations. It will bring more visitors to the town and the residents who have electric vehicles."

All of Solvang's stations are open round the clock and each has two charging ports. In addition to the veterans building, the other locations are city Parking Lot 1 at 1576 Mission Drive and city Parking Lot 3 at 482 Alisal Road.

Fees are based on each vehicle, according to Michael Chiacos, transportation specialist with the Community Environmental Council. But the average cost will be about \$1.25 to \$2 per hour. The city is allowed to set the charges, Mr. Chiacos said, which will be used to recoup the cost of electricity used.

Mr. Chiacos said there is a revolutionary change in personal transportation, with a focus on clean and sustainable energy.

"Electric vehicles achieve 30 to 40 percent better mileage in comparison (to gas-powered vehicles), which is about 100 miles per gallon equivalent," Mr. Chiacos said. "It has

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Community Environmental Council's Michael Chiacos, left, county Supervisor Doreen Farr, county Air Pollution Control District Director Dave Van Mullem and Solvang Mayor Jim Richardson celebrate the opening of a new EV charging station at the Veterans Memorial Building.

## Stations paid for without use of public funds

### EV

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three to four times more energy, produces zero tailpipe emissions and can reduce greenhouse gas pollution by 75 percent on California's green electricity grid when plugged in."

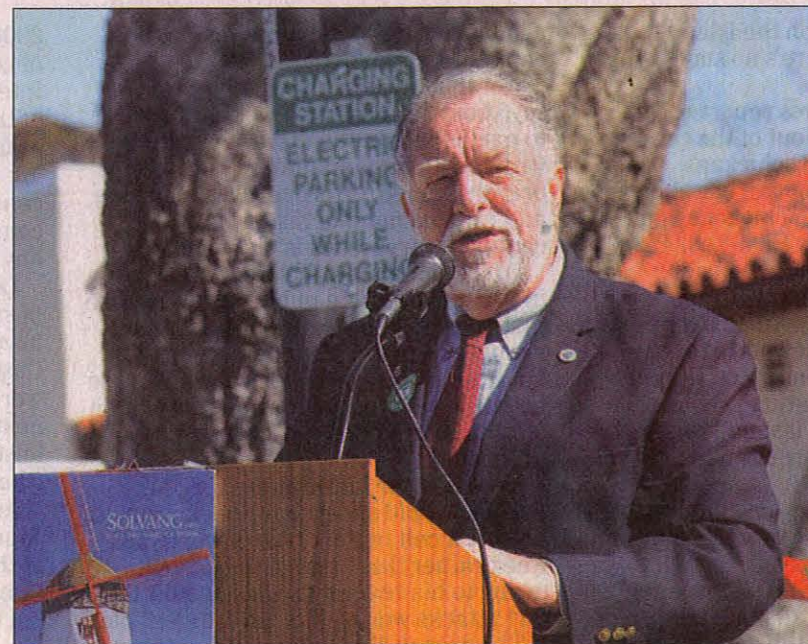
The electric vehicle also becomes cleaner as it gets older, he added, while regular cars get dirtier as they get older. Supporters said beyond the perceived environmental benefits, the vehicles will be using domestically produced electricity rather than sending the money to foreign counties for oil.

"This will keep the money in our local economy," Mr. Chiacos said, "which is very important."

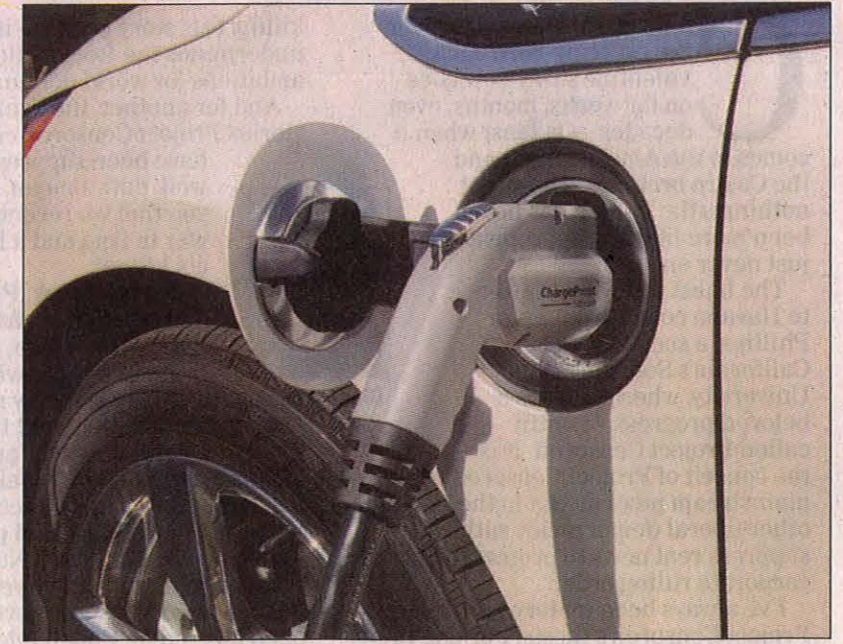
The charging stations are manufactured by Coulomb Technologies, and charge an electric vehicle at 240 volts, which is two to four times faster than a normal 120-volt outlet.

No public funds were used for the stations, Mr. Chiacos added. The stations were entirely paid for through grants from the Department of Energy, the California Energy Commission and private funds through Coulomb Technologies' ChargePoint America Program.

The ChargePoint Network, according to a press release, is the largest network of independently owned



At left, Mayor Jim Richardson touts the new electric vehicle charging stations, which can be found by following the white and green signs shown at center. At right, a Chevrolet Volt at one of three new public charging stations in Solvang.



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charging stations in the world, providing information to electric vehicle drivers such as charge cost management, trip planning and how to operate the stations.

According to John Whitney, director of Channel Development who

works with Coulomb, each charging station can cost up to \$7,000 in retail, in addition to a \$4,500 average installation fee.

"The average for each station is about \$10,000," Mr. Whitney said. "It took about a year to install the sta-

tions in Solvang and the city made sure the money was spent well."

Following Solvang, the county will soon be taking steps to expand the network, with 18 charging stations already planned for Santa Maria, Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Goleta and

Carpinteria, joining more than 4,600 stations throughout the U.S.

Dave Van Mullem, director of the county Air Pollution Control District, said the popularity of electric vehicles is taking off like rockets from Vandenberg Air Force Base.

"It feels good, it makes economic sense," he said. "It's outstanding for the environment and as the range improves, acceptance will be greater."

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