

# American Interest In Electric Cars Is Growing Rapidly

By Randy Olson

The article I wrote about plug-in electric cars and hybrid vehicles in the June issue of "The Cooperative Connection" has drawn a lot of attention from our readers. Video rentals of the fact-based movie documentary entitled *Who Killed the Electric Car?* are also spiking. By the way, Blockbuster Video Stores have it in stock if you wish to rent the movie---it's a must see for everyone. It provides very good background information for this discussion to understand where we have been and where we are now going as electric vehicle transportation becomes a reality.



If you watched the video documentary or found last month's article compelling, here is some follow-up information for you. The \$4.00 a gallon gasoline has taken its toll on General Motors. Their vehicle sales are down 27% so far this year and they just announced the closing of (4) manufacturing plants that employed 10,000 people who assembled GM trucks and SUV's. Many people believe that the decision by GM to crush their EV1 electric car in favor of producing big gas guzzlers was a show of solidarity with the big oil companies. It now seems apparent that GM made a huge marketing blunder by scrapping the popular EV1 that roamed the California roadways over a seven year period. After recalling and crushing the popular electric cars, GM also sold their NIMH battery technology to big oil. They are now changing their focus to concentrate on smaller vehicles, and they plan to introduce the Chevrolet Volt plug-in hybrid

in 2010. However, by selling off the previous battery technology, GM is now near the back of the pack in the race to fill the surging demand for dual hybrids and plug-in electric cars. The concept Chevy Volt has been undergoing extensive battery testing as GM looks for a solution to compete in the global automobile market.

Jill Banaszynski, Manager of Electric Vehicle Programs at GM, defends the automaker's decision to scrap the EV1, which was first introduced to California residents in 1996. "When GM launched the EV1, gas was cheap, there was not a war in Iraq, and there was less discussion about global warming," said Banaszynski. "There were far fewer reasons for people to make the trade-offs in their transportation lifestyle to make the EV1 work for them."

Meanwhile, a major Chinese battery manufacturer, BYD, is poised to enter the U.S. auto market with a 4-door sedan that can accommodate the family. It's called the E6 electric vehicle. Top speed is 100mph with a range of 186 miles on a single charge, which is well within the realm of most daily driving needs in America. BYD is the biggest battery maker in China, and the second largest battery supplier in the world. If you own a cell phone or a mp3 player, chances are you already use a BYD battery product. Their E6 all-electric vehicle is pictured at right.



The continued high price of gasoline is creating an enormous demand for plug-in electric vehicles. BYD isn't the only automaker outside of the Detroit big 3 to see the light. Another Chinese company, Miles Automotive Group,

[www.milesev.com](http://www.milesev.com) has already established a U.S. presence in Los Angeles with plans to market their (XS-500) 4-door sedan as soon as possible in this country. It will travel 120 miles on a single charge at a top speed of 80mph.



Both of the Chinese automakers have indicated that they expect to market their 4-door electric sedans in the U.S. with a price tag ranging from \$35,000 to \$39,000. No word yet from General Motors about the expected retail price of their Chevrolet Volt in 2010.