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Beijing invests heavily in electric vehicles- ELECTRIC CHINA WEEKLY No19

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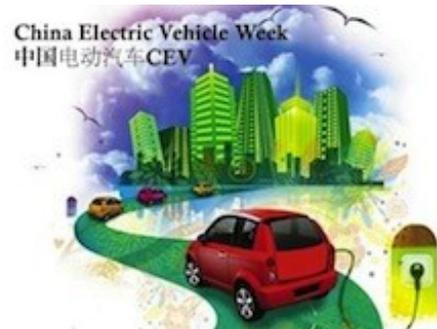
In May, Beijing launched its first EV rental demonstration base in the Tsinghua University Science Park. The city plans to have 50,000 electric cars, which will include 30,000 private vehicles, and 8,000 public buses by 2015.

In order to alleviate the capital city's infamous congestion and pollution problems, Beijing is investing heavily in the expanding the use of electric vehicles among its citizens. The city now is launching series of initiatives to promote the use of electric cars.

Beijing aims to have 50,000 electric cars by 2015

Beijing plans to have 50,000 electric cars by 2015, which will include 30,000 private vehicles, 8,000 public buses — a third of the total number of buses in Beijing — 10,000 taxis or government vehicles and 2,000 vehicles for uses in the logistics, environmental, postal and rental sectors.

High acquisition cost is one of the biggest barriers for the uptake of electric cars in the city. In order to promote electric vehicles, the city of Beijing and the central government are each offering a 60,000 RMB (€ 7,521) subsidy to private citizens willing to purchase an electric car. The market price of an electric vehicle in Beijing is usually above 200,000 RMB (€ 25,068). With the 120,000 RMB (€15,041) from the government subsidy, a consumer can expect to afford an electric vehicle which does not have a higher cost compared with a traditional vehicle.



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According to BAIC, one of China's largest state-owned automakers, the front-end cost of an electric car is about the same as a traditional car, but an electric car and a traditional car have vastly different maintenance costs. Xu Heyi, the president of BAIC said: "A traditional car will run around 20,000 kilometers per year and cost 20,000 (€2,507) to 30,000 RMB (€3,760) to maintain. One of BAIC's electric cars, however, only costs 12 RMB (€1,5) to run 100 kilometers, so the cost of maintaining an electric car for a year will only be 2,400 RMB (€301)."

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Beijing is also working to remove other market barriers for electric vehicles. The city is investing in infrastructure construction for electric vehicles. At the end of 2012, Beijing had established the largest electric car charging station in the world, which can service and charge up to 400 electric vehicles per day. Besides this, Beijing also has 4 other charging stations and 15 groups of charging posts around Beijing. In 2013, the city plans to build a further 6,000 charging posts.

In addition, as part of the initiative to popularise electric cars in Beijing, the municipal government also encourages consumers to test-drive electric cars. They can sign up on evbeijing.cn.

Beijing launches its first EV rental demonstration station

In May, Beijing launched its first EV rental demonstration station in the Tsinghua University Science Park. Customers can rent electric cars for 2 hours for 49 RMB (€6) or for a whole day for 99 RMB (€12). The rental cost for a month is 1,999 RMB (€250), which is even lower than the cost of renting a combustion engine car in Beijing. It costs less than 19 RMB (€2.4) to fully charge a car, which will run for 120 kilometres. In traffic, the vehicle can last for as long as 160 km as the slow speeds save energy.

Beijing Municipal Commission of Science and Technology initiated the project in order to promote private use of electric cars in Beijing. According to the organiser of the project, all 15 electric cars were booked within three days of the Beijing launch. Most customers were people working in the park, where lots of high-tech enterprises are based. The electric cars used in the project are the E150EV produced by the Beijing Automotive Group. The park has also provided a power charging station that can accommodate 11 vehicles at a time, with 10 slow chargers and one fast one. Three more such stations will be built in the park over the next three months. According to the city's science and technology commission, 750 electric taxis are available in the suburbs, and 2,000 more will come into service this year.

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