

State police hit the gas on fuel-saving measures

By Jessica Van Sack | Monday, July 28, 2008 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | **Local Coverage**

Faced with budget-busting fuel costs that have increased by more than \$4 million in three years, the Massachusetts State Police is becoming more fuel efficient.

Three-wheeled scooters that the state police test drove on the Esplanade for the Fourth of July will soon become a new addition to the department. Two to four electric T3 vehicles - which look like the stand-up Segway scooters - will be purchased within the next year.

"They were well-received by those who were using them, and we were pleased with their performance," said state police spokesman Dave Procopio.

Procopio said the state police foresee using the T3s on state parks and beaches like the Southwest Corridor and Castle Island in lieu of cruisers.

At \$8,000 apiece, they're one-third the price of a cruiser, and according to the manufacturer, the operating cost is 10 cents per day. The bigger price is speed - which tops off at about 20 mph.



Photo by State Police

The state police have struggled to find ways to make their fleet more fuel-efficient. Of 2,900 cruisers, 1,675 are 8-cylinder Ford Crown Victorias, with their notoriously gas-guzzling 17 to 25 miles per gallon.

But like many public safety agencies, they are dogged by the fact that police pursuit vehicles require a speed and durability that hybrids don't have.

According to Sgt. Robert M. Bousquet Jr., new cruisers purchased this past fiscal year can burn E85, a blend of ethanol and conventional gas that some departments, like the one in Orlando, Fla., are already using.

The state police recently purchased two hybrid Ford Escapes for support staff and has plans to buy as many as 10 more for its crime scene services unit. And supplies are transported from state police headquarters to the barracks via five natural gas Ford Econoline vans - but they can only fuel up at a select few natural gas pumps throughout the state.

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