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Battery-powered vehicles help campus safety patrol, save money

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Campus Safety is trying to save some green and go green, purchasing two battery-powered vehicles in lieu of new patrol cars.

“We needed to replace two patrol cars,” explains Don Enloe, director of Campus Safety, “so instead of buying another gasoline-powered car we thought we would look for something a little greener.”

The T3 model vehicles have been in use since late November.

T3s come with two rechargeable batteries, each of which last for an eight-hour shift and take three to four hours to recharge, according to Parking Enforcement Officer Chris Meyer. Campus Safety has set them to a maximum speed of 12 mph.

The initial investment, at about \$11,000 per vehicle, was less than two-thirds the price of purchasing two traditional patrol vehicles, according to Enloe. Each costs about 20 cents per day to operate, compared to the \$25 per day average fuel cost for a single patrol vehicle. After two years of service, Enloe says, the T3s will pay for themselves through savings in fuel costs alone.

Aside from clean-energy and cost-efficiency, T3 models have a number of advantages over other clean-energy vehicles, Enloe says. T3s come equipped with warning lights, sirens and a raised platform that affords the operator greater visibility. Additionally, the three-wheeled T3 provides greater stability than a two-wheeled Segway, and the T3's zero-degree turn radius makes it more maneuverable than a golf cart.



PHOTO BY: Wayne Armstrong

Since November, Campus Safety has been using two battery-powered vehicles to help save money. Chris Meyer, a parking enforcement officer, says her new ride has prompted a lot of curiosity.

isn't practical," says Enloe.

Officers operating the units have noticed another perk. As a person who hands out tickets, Meyer concedes that her line of work hasn't made her many friends on campus. But, she has been pleased with the amount of community interaction prompted by curiosity in her new ride.

"The public is much more willing to stop. In the process of telling someone about the vehicle there is an opportunity to answer other questions," Meyer says.

Campus Safety hopes to use the T3s at least 300 days a year.