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Parking Enforcement Takes Modern Turn

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Valley College students saw the future of parking enforcement last week in the form of a sleek three-wheeled, black and white chariot that reminded them that parking is still an issue on campus.

A few observant students and faculty members saw the testing of a new police vehicle at Valley. The new vehicle is called a T3, a zero emission clean energy vehicle that looks like a big brother to the Segway with a third wheel. According to T3motion.com, the small vehicle weighs 240 pounds, logs up to 25 miles on a single charge and clocks in at 25-miles-per hour at its fastest.

The T3 is being tested at Pierce College. It was seen on the Valley campus roaming parking lots, as if practicing for parking enforcement. The T3's ultimate use, if purchased, has yet to be established, according to campus officials.

"The Sheriff's department in general is going to buy 12 of them," said Vice President of Administration Tom Jacobsmeyer. "We might get one to test between all nine campuses to see if we like them."

The T3 costs about \$6,000, with operational costs about 25 cents a day. These vehicles have also been tested at USC and other colleges. The Orange County Register reported that the Costa Mesa police tested the T3 and gave it positive reviews, but opted to not use them because their size made them too difficult to store.

"I liked it a lot," said Valley security officer Roger Thompkins, who tested the T3. "It gets you where you're going, and you can turn it 180 degrees, while a golf cart takes a three-point turn."

Seeing the T3 being tested underscores how serious campus police are with parking enforcement at Valley.

With new students and returning students filling up the parking lots, it can be tough to find a space, but even tougher if you do not have a parking pass. In addition, the two-week grace period for students parking in lots without a \$20 permit ends Tuesday.

"They check here all the time," said broadcasting major Jackie Ochoa "And if you pay the ticket after the due date they charge you more."

In 2006 there were 6,102 parking citations issued, with an average ticket cost of \$35. Last year, the college collected \$40,000 on parking tickets, with the money headed to the general fund to help pay for such things as landscaping and other campus upkeep. The money also helped pay for three new white golf carts that will be used to help escort students to their cars at night.

"We prefer that they buy the parking pass as opposed to get the parking ticket." Jacobsmeyer said. "There's a lot less angst in the parking pass and it is also cheaper."

The passes are available at the Business Office in the Campus Center.

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