



CSU Police Department Officer Michelle Inge displays a T3 scooter in front of Green Hall on Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008. The new T3 scooters are part of CSU's "Go Green" campaign.

CSUPD scoots around campus

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The CSU police department is trying out a fleet of four new electrical scooters to contribute to the school's "green" image and create a safer, friendlier environment for students.

The three-wheeled "electrical chariots," as Assistant Chief of Police Frank Johnson called them, were purchased in July.

The T3s run on entirely on rechargeable and removable batteries, and are emissions-free. Each vehicle is expected to operate at about 10 cents of energy per day, or 500 miles per gallon -- theoretically, if the vehicles used gas -- according to the Web site of the parent company, T3 Motion.

Johnson said the scooters' energy efficiency was one of the main reasons behind the purchase of the \$9,000-a-piece "chariots." He said the department is trying to contribute to CSU's "go green" campaign.

"It's part of us doing our part," Johnson said.

He added that the vehicles are already saving the department in gas expenditures because the scooters are used instead of motor vehicles such as patrol cars or motorcycles on campus.

Aside from being environmentally friendly, the T3s also offer a variety of advantages that traditional vehicles or patrolling on foot do not.

The T3s combine mobility and speed to help police officers patrol campus. The machines are able to move through confined areas that patrol cars can't access and, with a top speed of about 20 mph, they allow for a faster response than an officer on foot could provide.

Johnson said that with all the construction going on around campus, getting around can be particularly difficult, and their mobility is especially helpful.

The vehicles can also be equipped with snow tires for operation during the winter, and the scooters provide an elevated vantage point that aids in overseeing crowds.

Johnson said the officers have received the new editions positively and "they like what they can do with [the T3's]."

"Contrary to what people believe, we want them to approach us," Johnson said. He believes the T3s are helping with this and said that students feel much more at ease coming up to an officer on one of the new vehicles than they do approaching a squad car.

"Students seem to love them. They always want to ride," he said.

While a ride may be too much to hope for, some students said are they are intrigued by the new vehicles, albeit with mixed reactions.

"The first time I saw one I was like, 'Am I in a movie?'" junior student Katie Rice said. Despite her enthusiasm for the science fiction look of the scooters, Rice said at the cost, "It seems a little wasteful."

On the other hand, Rice's friend Haley Black, also a junior, said she thought the T3s are anything but wasteful.

"I think its smart, us using these instead of a car with gas," Black said.

Johnson said the department will evaluate the performance of the T3s and may look into purchasing more in the future.

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