



Electric vehicles let CSU police go green on campus

By John Lehndorff

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Scofflaws are naturally scared when they see a police car coming with lights and sirens running. But ask officers and they'll tell you that members of the public are also petrified of the black- and-white patrol vehicles - even if they're *not* exceeding the speed limit.

That's one reason the Colorado State University Police Department recently acquired four T3 personal law-enforcement vehicles.

The T3 is an electric, stand-up transporter. Unlike the futuristic but notoriously unsteady Segway, the T3 is a solid three-wheeler that has handlebars similar to a scooter's.

"It's great for community-oriented police work," said Frank Johnson, assistant chief of the Colorado State University Police Department.

"People will stop us. It makes us much more approachable than when we're in the box on wheels," he said.

Johnson, who has been on the campus force for three years, said he was among the first officers to test the contraption.

"One of the reasons we have T3s is that I got to try one out. It's a pretty cool way to get around campus," he said.

Johnson praised the maneuverable vehicle because it makes the vast areas of the campus that are not paved instantly accessible to officers.

"We can get on the plaza. If there's a crowd, we can get in without worrying about running anyone over," he said. The vehicle's raised platform allows the rider to see over the heads of pedestrians.

The T3 can go down alleys, walkways and other areas too tight for squad cars. With a top speed of 20 miles per hour, the transporter moves faster than an officer on foot.

With an all-electric motor, it is also environmentally friendly and a considerable money-saver, even at a cost of \$9,000 per vehicle.

According to the manufacturer, California-based T3 Motion, the T3 costs an average of only 10 cents per day to run. On a full charge of its two removable power units, it can run for up to three hours.

"It really helps us with our campus go-green campaign," Johnson said.

The T3 is also in use by the Colorado Spring Fire Department, the Los Angeles Police Department and police forces in New York City, Miami and Dallas. Look closely at television coverage of the Republican National Convention and you

may see Minneapolis' finest aboard *their* T3s.

Although the quiet vehicle is exposed to the weather and has considerably less space for carrying suspects, weapons, computers and doughnuts, "the officers (at CSU) are fighting over who gets to use them. It's first-come, first- served," Johnson said.

According to the manufacturer, the first models for consumers won't be introduced for at least two years.

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About the T3

- * Zero emissions
- * Introduced in 2006
- * Zero-degree turning radius
- * Has no reverse gear
- * Energy-efficient LED lights
- * Optional snow tires available
- * Minimal maintenance

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