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Shipyard Plantation scoots toward energy savings

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Shipyard Plantation security officer Ed Deak scooted across the Hilton Head Island community's parking lot last week, showing off his newest security vehicle -- an electric-powered, lightweight three-wheeler.

Shipyard officials say the vehicle, called a T3, will save more than \$24,000 a year on gasoline and maintenance.

Previously, Shipyard had relied on two Ford Crown Victoria's to cruise the community. Now the cars take turns sitting in the parking lot, and the T3 takes over one of the patrol shifts.

Shipyard's security chief Brian Pettersenis sold on the vehicle, which has a top speed of 25 mph.

"It's a no-brainer the way gas prices are now," Pettersenis said.

T3 Motion, the California company that sells the vehicles, boasts they cost less than 10 cents a day to power. Shipyard paid \$12,000 for its vehicle.




Photo: Shipyard Plantation security officer Michael Babcock poses last week on the plantation's new three-wheeled T3 security scooter. Made by Interceptor Public Safety Products, the electric scooter costs \$12,000, can reach 25

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For Shipyard, which plans to run its T3 around the clock, the daily cost works out to be about 30 cents a day. It costs more than \$42 a day to drive a squad car.

mph and can operate for up to eight hours on a single charge.
Jay Karr/The Island Packet
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Apart from the energy savings and environmental benefits from the no-emission T3, Pettersen said the vehicle is easy to maneuver, allowing officers to get around on the community's golf course, which was unthinkable in a car.

Deak added that residents also are warming up to the new vehicle.

A common reaction to Shipyard's police-style cruisers had been for residents to turn their heads away, he said. But because the T3 is less imposing, officers riding it have been talking with residents more often.

"It's the thing of the future," Pettersen said, adding that Shipyard was considering getting another T3 and permanently retiring one of its Crowne Victorias. Pettersen added that he thought other gated communities would follow the trend.

Another island plantation, Palmetto Dunes, is considering the vehicle, according to an employee there.

Shipyard general manager Sally Warren was also on hand as Deak zoomed around the lot. She said everyone loved it, but she did discover an unforeseen cost for the security office.

Looking at Deak's exposed forehead as he pulled the scooter to a stop, she remarked, "We're going to have to buy you some sunscreen."

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