

## Energy storage for electric vehicles venezuela

In Venezuela, people often must wait in long lines to get fuel for their vehicles. Fuel shortages are common because oil production has dropped in the country. Poor maintenance and lack of investment by Venezuela's state-owned oil industry are some reasons for the drop in production.

In Maracaibo, a once-wealthy oil city, two innovators have built small solar-powered and electric cars. And they are promoting the manufacture and use of these cars instead of vehicles that use fossil fuels.

José Cintron is a 43-year-old electrical technician. He developed a solar-powered car. Augusto Pradelli, 61, created a small electric vehicle that can also use solar panels. Both cars are built on the frame of old golf carts with more powerful batteries.

Cintron and Pradelli explained the benefits of solar energy. Pradelli said, "the beauty of solar charge is that as long as there is sun, the car is always charging. The sun is free, and that's what you have to take advantage of." And Cintron said, "solar energy is the future, we have to stop relying on fossil fuels." He added that the change to solar energy will not happen in a very short period of time, and he said, "oil is not going to go away that easily."

The two men used their own money to build the small solar and electric cars. They hope to work together to develop a hybrid electric car. And they hope that one day the car will be produced nationally, a big dream in a country that was once one of the world's top oil producers.

Maracaibo has a population of 2 million people. It is the second-largest city in Venezuela. Temperatures there are over 34 degrees Celsius almost all year. The heat makes walking uncomfortable. That is another reason less costly electric vehicles are an appealing choice.

"The president told me: 'Augusto, I'll buy it from you,'" said Pradelli. He added that he told the president that he would need the support to produce it. He said that to manufacture the vehicles, an industry is necessary.

Speaking from his work area in Maracaibo, Pradelli said, "These electric motors don't make noise, they don't vibrate, they don't pollute, they are the future. The world has to think about how to get out of pollution and global warming."

maintenance-n. work done to keep something in good operating condition (usually used with machinery or physical systems, such as car maintenance, road maintenance, water system maintenance)

hybrid-adj.describing a mixture of other things, especially two other things. In cars, it describes a mixture of two power sources, such as gasoline and electricity, or solar power and electricity.

vibrate-v.to shake with small, quick movements, usually at a rate of many times per second. For example, the vocal cords in the throat vibrate when a person is speaking.

Why is Venezuela interested in electric cars after having the cheapest gasoline in the world? A few years ago, while the rest of the world awakened to the idea of electric cars, in Venezuela it was unimaginable. With the price of a tank of gasoline at one cent on the dollar, nobody thought about ecology or new automotive technologies. Things have changed.

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