

## Gibson City family going green

By Jean Noellsch

Friday March 28, 2008

GIBSON CITY – The car is Illini blue, but it is green in theory and certainly saving the green for Gibson City Mayor Dan Dickey and his wife, Paula.

It is the all-electric car known as the ZENN (Zero Emission, No Noise). His honor's 2007 model is said to be the first ZENN car sold in the state of Illinois, according to Catherine Scrimgeour, spokeswoman for ZENN Motor Company of Toronto, Canada.

It never needs gas – just a regular 120-volt socket to recharge its six 12-volt batteries.

It can average 50 miles on a full charge and has an energy use equivalent that earns a 245 mpg rating.

However, the purchase did require some cooperation from Gibson City council members.



Jean Noellsch

Paula Dickey is ready for around-town travel in the family's all-electric ZENN car, said to be the first to be sold in Illinois.

The council passed an ordinance at this week's meeting allowing Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs) to be driven on city streets, since Illinois is one of seven states which does not have on-road regulations for the electric vehicles.

Because the state also doesn't issue license plates for them, Gibson City Police Chief Steve Cushman told the council, "I don't know how we'd issue a ticket to a vehicle that doesn't have a license, but I'll know more after I research it."

There's not much chance of the Dickeys getting a speeding ticket, as the car's top speed is 25 mph. But the car does require a licensed driver, a fact Chief Cushman emphasized after the meeting to Dickey's youngest son, Jacob.

The couple has three teen boys, and they were looking for a third car. They considered the rising price of gas, the low mileage of their SUV and truck and their mostly local day-to-day driving habits.

The Dickeys didn't choose a hybrid model because of the higher purchase price. The ZENN's sticker price with some options comes in around \$16,000, and Dan Dickey said the hybrids they priced were about \$30,000.

Both said a hybrid would have been their choice had either needed to commute to work.

After surfing the Internet, they decided an all-electric vehicle would be a good choice. But not just any electric vehicle – it had to feel and function like a car, not an overgrown bicycle or a golf cart.

"We chose the ZENN because it was most like a car," said Paula Dickey. In fact, she said its chassis is used in Europe for a small motor car.

She compared the car's styling to "a mini-Mini Cooper" while pointing out a surprisingly roomy interior that seats two people up to 6-feet, 5-inches tall and a large hatch-back cargo compartment.

"There's no oil to change or radiator work," Dan Dickey said.

"And think how long those tires are going to last at 25 mph."

---

Find this article at:

[http://www.news-gazette.com/news/2008/03/28/gibson\\_city\\_family\\_going\\_green](http://www.news-gazette.com/news/2008/03/28/gibson_city_family_going_green)

## Comments

---

**The News-Gazette.com**

The East Central Illinois Online News and Advertising Source

---

Contents of this site are © Copyright 2008 The News-Gazette, Inc. All rights reserved.