

## Electric Vehicle Guide

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### Profile: Vickie Bennett and her ZENN Electric Vehicle.



Kirkland resident Vickie Bennett and her green ZENN EV

This post introduces the ZENN electric car and a local owner and driver, Vickie Bennett. The ZENN is a Neighborhood Electric Vehicle and an option for people who are looking for an alternative to gasoline. The ZENN does not reach freeway speeds, but it is a great vehicle if you have a daily short commute like Vickie.

Vickie works as an office manager in her husband's CPA office. She lives in Kirkland and purchased the NEV in June of 2007. The NEV she owns is a ZENN car made by [Feel Good Motors](#) from Toronto. She believes that if every family in America replaced even just one of their gas powered vehicles it would make a huge difference in oil consumption alone, let alone all the other benefits of driving an electric car. This NEV puts out Zero Emissions and No Noise, hence the name of the car. It weighs around 1,200 pounds, doing much less damage to the street surface than larger cars, and goes by almost silently. Imagine taking a walk, and not having the constant noise of cars driving by.

Vickie's EV is green in color, and green as in "environmentally friendly".

***"I really feel like our local governments should be encouraging people to drive these cars, offering free parking and even free charging." - Vickie Bennett***

Below is the transcript of a conversation I had with Vickie in March 2008.

RP: What made you decide to purchase an Electric Vehicle?

VB: *I must give credit to my husband who researched on the internet and found a selection of cars and started the ball rolling. We needed to purchase an additional car since our daughter had begun driving.*

RP: How did you end up choosing the ZENN?

VB: *We went to MC Electric in Seattle to look at their selection of vehicles. One look at the ZENN, and it was love at first sight. Then we drove it, and right then decided that we could make this work for us.*

RP: An EV is not like a gasoline car. I'm sure you can explain better what the differences are, but the thing is, lifestyle adjustments are needed. For example, charging an EV currently takes hours whereas filling up a gas car at a station can take less than 10 minutes. And with an EV you don't need a gas station: you can just unplug the toaster in your home and plug in your car. So different habits are needed.

Did your ZENN meet all the expectations you had before you started driving an EV? Or did any aspect of the ZENN disappoint you?

VB: *Our ZENN is limited by speed and distance, which we knew ahead of time. Our commute is five miles from door to door. The only disappointment that I can really think of is that the heater is not really very good. Luckily we live in a pretty mild climate, and you are just not in the car all that long, so it really was not an issue. I will gladly wear a jacket and a pair of gloves, in exchange for almost free driving!*

RP: Do you unplug your toaster and plug in your car at night? How do you charge your ZENN?

VB: *Well, I already had my toaster unplugged, but yes I just plug in the car when I get home. We already had a 110 [volt] outlet in our carport, so we didn't even have to prepare anything special for our car. It takes 8 hours to charge if the batteries were completely drained, which has never happened yet. You can "opportunity charge" which means at any point during the day if you can plug it in, you do so. In 4 hours you can have an 80% full charge. I read where someone said it takes 20 seconds to charge it, 10 seconds to plug it in at night and 10 seconds to unplug it in the morning.*

RP: How much does your "fuel" cost? I.e., how much does electricity cost you on average compared to gasoline?

VB: *The ZENN costs a penny a mile to drive. So if I drive 15 miles during the course of the day, it will take about 15 cents in electricity to get back to a full charge. I have driven my ZENN a little over 3,100 miles, so I have spent roughly \$31 in the last 9 months. One other benefit is the auto coverage. My auto insurance is under \$200 a year for my car. Between fuel and insurance, that is a very large savings.*

RP: Do you drive everyday? How much driving do you do with your car?

VB: *I drive my car every day. Most days I end up driving about 15 miles.*

RP: You also have a gasoline car, right? Do members of your family borrow your ZENN?

VB: *Yes, we also own 2 Hondas: an Accord and a Civic. We use the Civic for most of our other driving, especially if we need to go any [long] distance. Our daughter will drive the ZENN to school sometimes, and to a friend's house or downtown Kirkland to the movies, but she has to get me out of it first! Today my husband drove it to the office, but mostly, I am the one who drives it.*

RP: What future do you see for yourself as a driver, and for EVs in general?

VB: *I see EVs becoming a very common form of transportation. I think we are heading to a point where the price of gas is going to determine where we go and how we get there. We plan to buy a second EV maybe in a year when we can buy a longer range, higher speed version. A year ago when we bought it, it seemed like a far out idea to a lot of our friends and neighbors. Nine months later, it certainly looks like the way of our future. I could not be happier with our decision to purchase the car. I love driving by the gas stations, knowing I don't have to stop there in this car. I know people say, yeah but you can only go so far, and you can't do this or can't do that, but very soon, with the rising price of oil, we are all going to do whatever it takes to conserve by taking shorter commutes, and not doing pleasure driving. That is what my car is for, short local trips.*

If you have any questions about the ZENN EV I am sure that Vickie would be happy to answer them. Vickie also told me she gets a lot of attention every time she goes to the grocery store because her car is so far pretty unique. And she takes the time to talk to people, answer questions and tell them stories about her ZENN.

Vickie and her husband Erik purchased the ZENN from [MC Electric](#). MC Electric is located at 1200 S. Dearborn Street - Seattle, WA 98144.

Posted by [Ricardo Parker](#) at March 30, 2008 8:16 p.m.

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