



NEWS ADVISORY

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For immediate release



City Teams Up with NorthWestern Energy on Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Please join the City of Missoula and NorthWestern Energy for a news conference introducing two electric vehicle charging stations at the City's Park Place parking structure at 201 E. Front St. on Friday, March 10, at 12:15 p.m. News reporters and the public are invited.

The two charging stations are situated in the parking structure in short-term hourly parking on the ramp going up from Front Street and in the lease area below that. They are Level 2 charging stations, which will charge all models of electric vehicles (EVs). Level 2 charging stations provide about 10 miles of charge per hour of charging. For these initial two charging stations, the Missoula Parking Commission is providing the service free of charge.

NorthWestern and the Missoula Parking Commission are using these two EV charging stations as a test to gauge the demand for more charging stations at public facilities.

"The installation of these two charging stations is pretty exciting for us," said Rod Austin, director of the Parking Commission. "These two stations will be the first charging stations open to the public in downtown Missoula. They will begin to give us an indication of what demand is out there with the idea of looking to add more charging stations based on that demand."

"This is just one example of our continued environmental commitment at NorthWestern Energy," said Bob Rowe, CEO. "Coupled with our hydro-based, low-carbon generating fleet, electrification of transportation, where it makes sense to the customer, would help further reduce carbon dioxide emissions in our service territory."

Chase Jones, the City's energy conservation coordinator, provided the connection between the City and NorthWestern while serving on NorthWestern's Community Sustainable Energy Working

Group. One model the group studied paired rooftop solar with electric vehicle charging stations to maximize emissions reductions from both electricity supply and transportation. Park Place has half of that best practices model with a solar array on the roof that powers 80 percent of the structure's electric needs with clean, renewable energy, with the remaining powered by NorthWestern Energy.

“The partnership at Park Place seemed to be a perfect fit,” Jones said. “We hope that by locating electric vehicle charging stations in the heart of downtown where people work, shop, dine, do business and play, it's easier and more convenient to use electric vehicles. Having this service available where people spend time is both a huge benefit to the community and a key strategy in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

Jones will speak at Friday's news conference. He'll be joined by Rod Austin of the Parking Commission, NorthWestern Energy corporate communications specialist Butch Larcombe and by Missoula architect Scott Moses, owner of a Nissan LEAF who hopes to be among the first customers at the charging stations. Moses is passionate about sustainable design and about saving money for the clients at A & E Architects, where he works as a staff architect. Moses sold his 10-miles-per-gallon pickup truck for the LEAF, which accomplishes 100+ MPG equivalent. The convenience of a charging station close to his office on Higgins Avenue relieves his “range anxiety.”

“Range anxiety is considered to be one of the major barriers to large-scale adoption of electric cars,” he said. “However, on a positive note, the range anxiety does make me think about whether I need to drive or whether I could just walk, ride my bike or group that task in with another trip.”

For NorthWestern, the small Missoula pilot project is way to test EV chargers, understand the economics of their operation and analyze usage patterns. While there are no immediate plans to install such chargers elsewhere in Montana, NorthWestern has committed more than \$3 million to similar sustainable energy projects since 2015.

These charging stations are the latest community-focused, sustainable pilot project to arise from a year-long working group that provided input and help developed priorities for NorthWestern's sustainability initiatives. The state's largest solar pilot project, testing multiple project attributes, came online in Bozeman this fall as part of this program. Additional pilot projects are planned in Missoula and Helena in 2017 and 2018.

NorthWestern Energy provides electricity and natural gas in the Upper Midwest and Northwest, serving approximately 701,000 customers in Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska. More information on NorthWestern Energy is available on the company's website at www.northwesternenergy.com

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