

# Eugene company puts electric cars on the market

■ **GIZMO:** The small, one-person vehicles are ideal for short jaunts around town

By Jennifer Schmitt  
Community Editor

Imagine having a car that doesn't need gasoline, never needs oil and can be fueled by plugging it into any electrical outlet that can take a three-pronged plug.

Imagination has met with reality, and electric vehicles are on the market. A Eugene company called Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVCO) has built electric vehicles for people to use as an alternative form of transportation. The single passenger vehicle, called a gizmo, is operated by a battery and emits no pollution, according to a NEVCO press release.

The vehicles are similar to a cross between a car and a bicycle and are designed to fit the everyday driving needs of people, said Carl Watkins, a representative of NEVCO.

"Our opinion was that we don't need to go through a high-tech expensive design to get an electric car to work," he said. "We wanted something people could use for trips around town and still afford to buy."

The \$6,450 gizmo costs an average of a penny a mile to run, depending on people's individual utility rates, Watkins said.

The gizmo is designed for short trips around town since it is only able to go approximately 25 miles before the battery runs out, and the top driving speed for the vehicle is 30 mph, Watkins said.

"This would be perfect for col-



Employees of EWEB examine an electric car called "gizmo," which the company will use for meter reading.

lege students who just need something to get to campus and the store," Watkins said.

The vehicles, which are licensed and insured as motor scooters, take approximately three to four hours to recharge completely. A 25-foot-long cord is attached to the front of the vehicle and the battery can be recharged by plugging it into any 110-volt

outlet.

Eugene Water and Electric Board has leased two gizmos to add to their motor pool on a trial basis.

"We think this will fit a notch in our activities and be useful for things such as meter reading where we are just traveling around in town," said Mathew Northway, manager of energy management.

EWEB is planning on using the first gizmos for meter readers and home inspectors who make numerous trips around the city.

"Jobs such as meter reading require just one person usually making short trips," Northway said. "We are hoping these cars will cost much less and have less impact on the environment."

EWEB's meter readers current-

## THE GIZMO

- **WHAT:** An enclosed, three-wheeled, all-weather vehicle operated by a battery
- **TOP SPEED:** 30 mph
- **RANGE:** 25 miles
- **RECHARGE TIME:** 3.5 hours
- **COST:** \$6,450
- **MANUFACTURED BY:** Neighborhood Electric Vehicle Company in Eugene

ly use pick-up trucks and bicycles for their trips when the location is too far to walk, he said.

The two gizmos are an experiment to see how useful they are for the company.

"We are cautious and didn't want to just buy 100 right away," Northway said. "We are going to try some experiments and see if there are applications where we can use this that we haven't thought of yet."

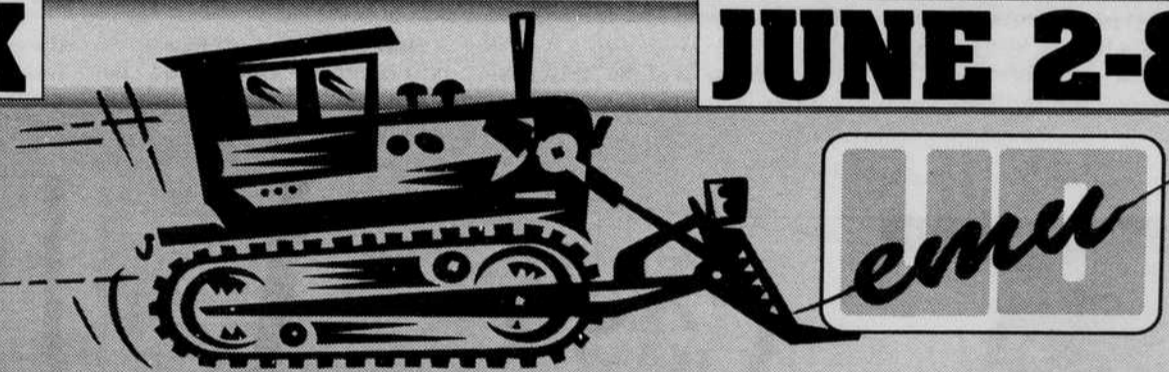
The gizmo does not look like a standard automobile. For instance, it only has three wheels; the front two wheels are for steering and stopping and the back wheel is for driving. There is no steering wheel but there are two levers on either side of the seat that work similar to handlebars on a bicycle for steering. There are no pedals to push and the vehicle is accelerated by pulling on the throttle.

NEVCO has manufactured five gizmos and is in the process of making three more, Watkins said. There is a waiting list for the vehicles, but Watkins said cars are usually ready one month after they are ordered.

## THIS WEEK

## JUNE 2-8

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SUMMER!!!**



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### UPCOMING EVENTS

6/4 5:00 p.m. Road to Unlimited Devotion..... UO \$17 GP \$18.50

6/5 8:30 p.m. Robyn Hitchcock ..... \$10

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The EMU remodeling project has begun! Look for our bright yellow signs to help you with wayfinding and access to the building. Although our "front" doors are closed, there is still access to the west end of the building through the Fishbowl and Post Office/Walnut Room entrances. We apologize for any inconveniences.



6/5-7 Vinegar Tom..... UO\$3 GP\$6

**craft center**

### SUMMER ART CLASSES

registration starts Thursday, June 5 10am

SIGN UP SOON

UO-EMU Lower Level-346-4361

woodworking  
stained glass  
photography  
ceramics  
jewelry  
more



Summer & Fall child care applications are now available at the EMU Child Care and Development Centers "Quality Care to Meet Students' Needs"

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