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Local man converts own electric car

"Works pretty good around town," says Ed Struthers, who took his '87 Colt off gasoline

By David Sykes

A local man with a knack for doing things himself has taken another step and cut his dependence on gasoline, at least for some of his 'around town' transportation needs.

Ed Struthers of Heppner has gone electric, and not with a $40,000 Volt either. "I have wanted to do something like this for the past 20 years," Struthers says of his efforts to make himself an electric car and get off gasoline, at least for around town driving. So finally he says he just ordered the electric motor, pulled out the gas engine, made the necessary conversions, and put the electric components back in.

It took him about three weeks and cost between four and five thousand dollars, but he ended up with a real electric car. There are six 12 volt batteries in the back part of the car that supply power.

And how does it run? Apparently not too bad for getting around town. "I drive it to the grocery store, and out to the golf course and it does pretty good," says Struthers, adding that he got it up to about 53 miles per hour. Struthers has to go up a pretty steep hill to get home, he and his wife Marie live on Rock Street, and he says it does okay with that too.

A quick tour around town in the car shows that it does have good pick up. It has a five speed transmission with no clutch. "You know how you used to do it when you had a manual transmission?" he says of changing gears. "Just kind of slip it in there."

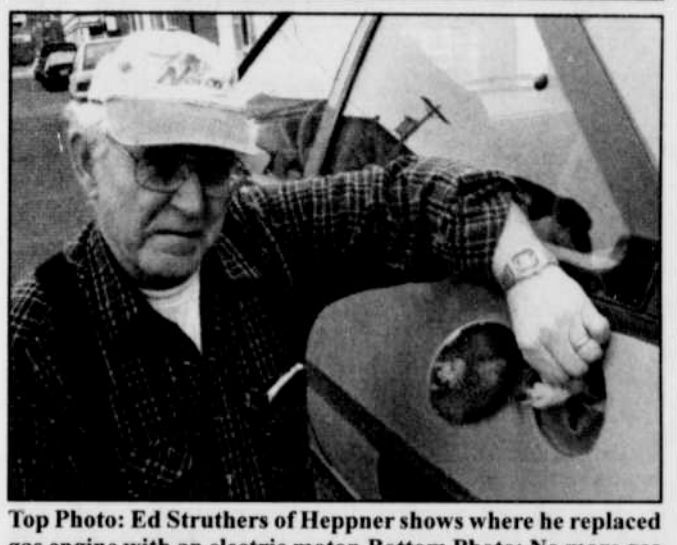
It doesn't need power steering and so far there is no heater. "I haven't figured that out yet but I am thinking about maybe a catalytic heater," says Struthers who is pretty handy, having built two of his own homes in Heppner, as well as having always enjoyed working with cars and other mechanical things. Struthers spent time as an electronic technician in the US Navy.

The motor is a 17 horsepower electric engine. "You can buy a whole "kit" but I just bought some of the components," Struthers says. He said Miller and Sons in Heppner did some fabrication to make things all fit. He basically bolted the electric motor, which fits sideways in the engine compartment, to the transmission just like a regular engine. There is of course no starter or flywheel.

The speed of the vehicle is controlled by increasing the current, using the former gas pedal, to the motor. He says he has stripped off a lot of the extra metal and other unnecessary parts to decrease the weight and make the vehicle lighter and thus more efficient.

And, of course, there are no maintenance costs like oil, and forget about the price of gas bumping up against four dollars per gallon. Struthers smiles as he holds the regular 110 volt plug-in placed, ironically, right where the former gas tank intake used to be.

Did he enjoy converting over the car to electric, Struthers was asked? "I did, but I would have liked it more if I had a garage to work in." He says all the work was done out in the weather, some of it during the winter months.



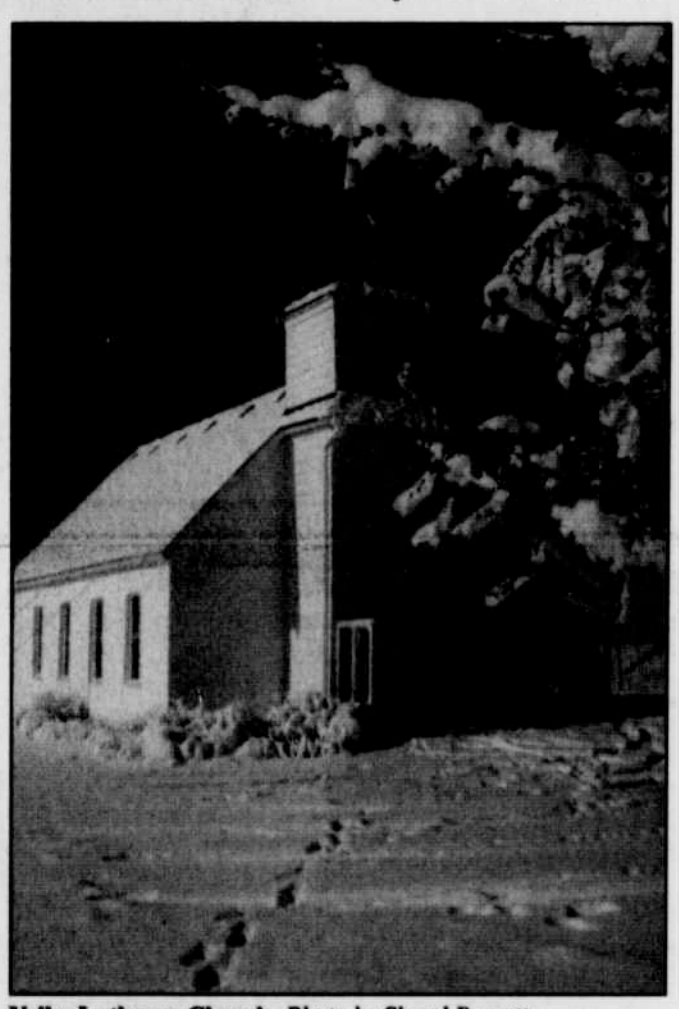
Top Photo: Ed Struthers of Heppner shows where he replaced gas engine with an electric motor. Bottom Photo: No more gas stations. Struthers shows where he plugs in his self built electric car. *-Photos by David Sykes*

Valby Lutheran Church celebrates 125 years of service

One of the oldest Lutheran Churches in the northwest is celebrating its 125th anniversary. Founded April 16, 1886, Dr. Norelius came to a place called "Alkali". He was met there by John Peterson and John Johnson, a section boss at the O.R. & M railroad.

Anyone coming into this area must go as far as Arlington and be met by buckboard, horseback or walk the long distance of 40-50 miles to Valby's location. Thanking the two Johns, they proceeded to a site 17 miles south of a small village called Ione. On Sunday, services were held at the John Johnson home where two baptisms were performed.

On April 19 a meeting was called to order and after discussion, it was unanimously decided to form a new church high atop a hill of native bunchgrass. This area had attracted Swedish homesteaders for a number of years. The group decided to call the new church, "Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation", or in Swedish language, "Shepherds Dell". At that time, membership had grown to 26l.



Valby Lutheran Church *-Photo by Sheryl Parrott*

The membership decided to form an organization called "Onward." Its mission was to interest folks from Sweden and also the surrounding area to join this Christian congregation. It also held weekly classes to study Swedish and English and especially to study the Oregon Board of Immigration to become American citizens.

Throughout the many years that followed, membership grew from all of the Ione and surrounding communities. A women's "missionary society" was formed with meetings at the various homes once a month.

As time moved on, many changes have evolved. Transportation evolved, wheat farming took over from cattle and sheep. Farms and ranches grew larger as children of the families attended local schools and then proceeded to their own careers in distant lands and places.

To celebrate the history of Valby, on May 1 the church is welcoming all of its church families, those whose were members generations ago, friends of those who have fond memories of their younger days at Valby, ands all of our Christian brothers and sisters of the many denominations within the area serving the one true God.

The schedule is as follows: At 10 Sunday morning, May 1, there will be coffee for those who will be traveling from afar, and for those who wish to visit prior to the festivities. From

-See VALBY CELEBRATES 125 YEARS/Page FIVE

G-T Trophy Corner

Bev Crum of Ione caught this 44-inch sturgeon on March 26 during a fishing trip on the Columbia River. *–Contributed photo*

Ione School Board aligns school calendar more toward college calendars

Longer Thanksgiving, later summer dismissal

By April Sykes

The Ione School Board, at its regular meeting Tuesday, March 29, approved a 2011-12 school calendar that moves the district's calendar more with in line with college calendars.

Principal Jerry Archer said that since the district is participating in the Eastern Promise, a pilot program which would allow Ione School students to earn college credits while still in high school, it is fitting that the school calendar come more in line with colleges. The new calendar provides for a longer Thanksgiving break, a two-week Christmas break and a later dismissal for summer vacation.

Archer said that another reason for extending the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks was to cut down on absences, since parents often take their children out of school for extended holiday vacations. He also touched on traditionally low attendance during state playoffs. "We all believe that school is more important than sports. School is number one, but if we're going to lose 50-60 kids..."

"If we qualify for a state tournament, we will close school. We will make up those day(s) up on the Friday(s) immediately following the tournament," said Archer.

Board member Lisa Rietmann asked if having no classes on Friday would become a problem for students obtaining college credits. Archer said that he had played with the idea of five-day school week and also of not starting school until late September, more in line with college classes.

Archer said that he had met numerous times with staff concerning the calendar and said they were in agreement, but the actual schedule was not seen by staff prior to board approval. In the 2011-12 calendar, teachers would start Tuesday, August 23; students would start Monday August 29; Thanksgiving break would be a week from Monday, November 21 through Friday, November 25; Christmas break would be two weeks, from Monday, December 19, through Sunday, January 1; spring break would be from Monday, March 26 through Friday, March 30; graduation would be Friday, June 8, with Wednesday, June 13, the last day of school for students and Friday, June 15, the last day for teachers.

Superintendent Mark Mulivhill said that an Eastern Promise mini-session, a four-week intensive study period to get kids ready to qualify for classes they need to obtain college credits, is being planned.

In other business, the board:

-discussed the purchase of a new or used boiler or HVAC system to replace the current aging system.

-learned that the district's computer server has been upgraded and will include the Google Apps (web applications) program. Google Apps for

-See IONE SCHOOL DISTRICT/Page FIVE

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