

Bancroft chamber driving positive, green future

By Sarah Sobanski

Electric car drivers can now charge up at the Bancroft Railway Station.

The Bancroft and District Chamber of Commerce has sponsored a Level 2 electric vehicle charging station. The station was officially opened last week.

Peterborough natives Luke and Margo Lee Burton donated the charging station. The couple often travels through Bancroft to get to their family's cottage outside of Barry's Bay.

The Lee Burtons used to have to break up their 2.5-hour commute with a "minimum 17-hour sleep break" at Silent Lake. There they would plug in their car with the electric outlets meant for RVs at the provincial park. They often worried about the commute.

"They call it range anxiety. It's like are we going to make it? Our range estimator jumps around whether we are going down hill or up hill." Luke explained that different environments can impact the battery life of a long drive. He retold an instance when Margo ran out of power driving through Prince Edward County.

He added, "[Having the station here now,] it's incredible. We really either could not, or would have to plug in with the RVs at Silent Lake. There were just no stations. It's great for electric drivers, but it's great for the area too because charging stations become a destination. When we're planning routes it's like let's go to this town because it has a charging station, and then we're in that town for two hours."

Electric car drivers who charge at home with a normal outlet can charge at approximately 5 per cent of battery life an hour. This could mean a 20 hour wait time for a fully charged battery. A Level 2 station can charge an electric vehicle at 25 to 30 per cent an hour. That cuts charging time down to three to four hours.

"With our chamber members supporting the installation of the charging station to the Bancroft train station, it will give folks who drive electric vehicles a comfort level knowing that they have a place to recharge " both their vehicles as well as themselves," said general manager for the chamber Greg Webb. "Looking at it from a tourism perspective, this will encourage owners of electric vehicles to venture out to explore the beautiful surroundings that this area brings " which of course will bring revenue to the local businesses."

When asked why they chose an electric vehicle for their family, even knowing that they would often have to travel long distances, Luke suggested electric vehicles are the cars people should be driving.

"We bought an electric car mostly because of our environmental stance," said Luke Lee Burton. "We just had this feeling every time we went to the pump we're saying yes, keep fighting wars in the Middle East and drilling oil in the tar sands. We can't do that. We knew we were an early adopter, the technology isn't perfect yet, but we'll be that."