

Electric cars to charge up locally

By Sarah Sobanski

Electric car drivers could charge up their vehicles in Bancroft as of 2017.

The Ontario government is building 500 electric vehicle-charging stations across the province at 250 locations. One of the planned stations is a Bancroft Tim Hortons, located at 234 Hastings Street North.

Franchise owner Glenn Keating couldn't confirm that the station would be put in, but said he was open to it.

"I am for everything that is green and helps our community become more of a destination for travellers," said Keating. "Having charging stations may not add to business, but it will allow a special convenience for those travelling through our town."

There are three types of charging stations. The higher the level of the station, the more quickly a car can charge. The planned station for the Tim Hortons is a Level 3 EVSE.

The stations are meant to encourage drivers to use electric vehicles more often. With more charging stations available, electric vehicle owners don't have to worry that their batteries will run out on long drives.

Prince Edwards/Hastings MPP Todd Smith doubted Bancroft would see a big impact because of the stations due to the small number of electric vehicles in the province.

"I don't think you're going to see a convoy of electric energy," said Smith, explaining most electric vehicles are used as close range commuter vehicles. "There are 7,000 electric vehicles in the province, the vast majority are in the GTA. You see the odd Tesla coming through town."

He added, "Nothing against Tim's, I love to sit and chat for a half hour. It takes a half hour to charge up to 80 per cent of its battery life. Not going to be the be all and end all."

The stations are a part of a \$20 million undertaking by Ontario's \$350 million Green Investment Fund. It works into the province's five-year Climate Change Action Plan which hopes to lower emissions levels by 80 per cent by 2050 - a goal that would see the province with emissions levels below what they were before 1990.

Smith said the stations were an example of the Ontario government spending money on things they didn't need. He suggested spotlighting electric vehicles was the wrong direction for the province's auto market.

"Ontario is trying to force auto markets to make these vehicles. There's no way that the Ontario government is going to force General Motors to create electric vehicles. We're 0.8 per cent of the global automobile market," said Smith. "Ontario has already done its part for climate change, our vehicles are already very emissions free. Our coal plants have been shut down."

The network is set to begin in partnership with 24 public and private sector partners including popular restaurant chains like Tim Hortons. Bancroft's station is the only station centred between stations in Huntsville, Pembroke, Perth and Fenelon Falls.

A map of the planned station can be found at www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/vehicles/electric/electric-vehicle-chargers-ontario.shtml.