

# THE POWER OUTLET

JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER of the SEATTLE ELECTRIC VEHICLE ASSOCIATION

"Education, demonstration, proliferation"

Since 1980



**Seattle Electric Vehicle Association**

SeattleEVA.org



*The Power Outlet is a monthly update about electric vehicle activities in Seattle and around the State of Washington*

*The Seattle Electric Vehicle Association (SEVA) is a non-profit organization of volunteers serving the Puget Sound region in Washington State since 1980. SEVA's mission is to **educate, demonstrate and proliferate the adoption of electric vehicles**. Monthly meetings are free and open to anyone interested in electric vehicles, and paid memberships are encouraged.*

SEVA has a [Facebook](#) page, too! Please like and follow us for up-to-the-minute updates.

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## Yakima Valley Trolley marshals support for a reprieve

The last historical intact operational electric interurban trolley railroad in the country is in Yakima, but its future is in danger. SEVA President Stephen Johnsen shared an update about the City of Yakima's plans to pave over the trolley tracks to save money, which would cut off the trolley's route from Yakima to Selah. Stephen's father, Ken, has been working to get the trolley line designated as a national historic landmark, but the city's financial problems mean the effort is running out of time. The Yakima Valley Trolleys already are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A National Parks representative even visited a few weeks ago to see the trolleys.



*Photos by Stephen Johnsen (below left, with his father, Ken)*

In the early 1900s most cities had thriving electric streetcar railways and interurban railways connected cities using electric trolleys. Unfortunately, most of these were destroyed and replaced with internal combustion buses in the 1940s and 1950s, Stephen explained. Yakima's oldest electric locomotive was built in 1910, and it still runs today - a testament to the lasting power, simplicity and reliability of electric motors! The car barn from 1908 still houses all the electrical equipment and the historic electric locomotives and trolley cars.



In December 2025, the city did not renew its operating agreement with the non-profit Yakima Valley Trolleys. The Yakima City Council meets on Jan. 20 to consider renewing the agreement as well as whether to proceed with paving over the tracks. SEVA members plan to meet at 10:45 a.m. near the EV charging stations in the Snoqualmie Casino garage and caravan over to Yakima and attend the council meeting to demonstrate support for saving the trolleys. Learn more about the trolleys [here](#).





## FEATURE of the MONTH

### EcoAutoNW offers a new way to find the EV of your dreams

For Genny Carter and Shannon Golbienko, the first couple of months in their new used EV sales business were pretty cold. They opened EcoAutoNW in October 2025, but the office space of small rooms was being remodeled to open up a large, welcoming lounge area. That construction work moved their desks out into the unheated service bays.

But it was worth it, they both said. Construction of the bright, warm office, complete with a fireplace and living plant wall, was completed at the end of December, just in time to welcome their first event. About 40 SEVA members filled the office for the Jan. 13 monthly meeting.

“It’s rare to meet anyone as dedicated to the mission of driving EVs as the people here at SEVA,” Genny said, so hosting the SEVA gathering seemed like a good way to inaugurate the remodeled office. The official grand opening event is scheduled for Feb. 13.

After 15 years of experience at Tesla, Genny joined forces with Shannon, a former co-worker, on a mission to make sure people have options and choices for purchasing used EVs, including the only independent EV service center in the state. Their sales model focuses on no pressure, unlike most car dealers, she pointed out. Pricing and financing are very transparent.



*EcoAutoNW co-founder Genny Carter*



*SEVA President Stephen Johnsen thanked EcoAutoNW for hosting the January SEVA meeting. Learn more at [EcoAutoNW.com](http://EcoAutoNW.com). Photos by Grace Reamer*

“I don’t sell cars. I help people buy cars,” said Gary Jackson II, the sales rep on their small-but-experience staff. He said he enjoys helping first-timers learn about the benefits of electric driving.

Part of the vision of the business was to design sales office to feel less sterile and more like a living-room with a couch, arm chairs, fireplace, plant wall, and natural materials and colors, Genny said.

“You have to slow down and you have to educate and you have to make sure they have access to charging,” Shannon explained about the EcoAutoNW operating philosophy. She has experience with Lucid and Ford as well as with Tesla. Many drivers have had bad dealership experiences and don’t want to be forced into a vehicle, she said. The good news is that lots of preowned vehicles are on the road now, but service from the dealers is expensive. As the service manager, Shannon makes sure all of the pricing is on the website.

They acknowledge that as a new business, they have limited inventory currently, but they handle all kinds of electric vehicles, from a fully optioned Hyundai Ionic 5 to a rare Mullen truck. But they also have the connections and expertise to search for any vehicle a customer wants, scouring auctions, online posts and used car lots where the salespeople know little about EVs. They also offer the option of consignment sales for owners who would like to get better price than trade-in value. In the future, they even plan to offer motor and battery replacement and repairs.



*EcoAutoNW co-founder Shannon Golbienko*

SEVA President Stephen Johnsen thanked Genny and Shannon for hosting the January SEVA meeting, and he noted his family ties with the location, when it used to house the vehicle emission testing station. In the 1980s, his uncle bought a Jet Industries Electrica Ford Escort that had been converted to electric with a DC motor. The state Department of Motor Vehicles sent him a letter requiring him to get an emissions test before he could renew his registration. He tried to explain the vehicle was all electric and had no emissions, but the DMV insisted. At the Renton test station, Stephen’s uncle laughed at the technician walking around the Escort and looking for the tailpipe. The DMV didn’t ever bother him again.

## CONVERSION CORNER

### It’s all about the batteries

One of the benefits of electric vehicles is that they can be upgraded almost endlessly, such as with software updates, wiring, and especially new batteries. SEVA President Stephen Johnsen noted that salvaged parts from crashed OEM cars are great for upgrades, and Nissan Leaf air-cooled battery packs are easy to use in conversions.

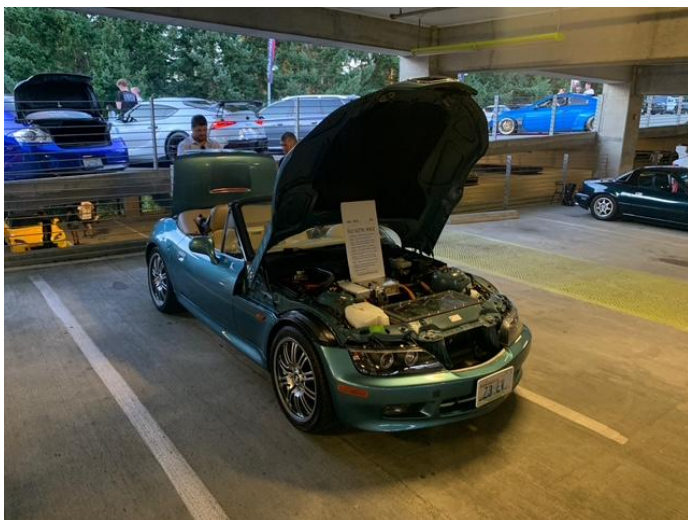


*Custom battery box in the BMW Z3. Photo by Charlie Tsai*



SEVA Board Treasurer Charlie Tsai recently completed a major battery upgrade for his unique BMW Z3 conversion, and he shared the process in a presentation for SEVA members. The sky blue 1996 Z3 conversion was completed several years ago by Charlie Cory Tsai, Stephen and the students in the EV conversion class Stephen was teaching at South Seattle College. They used 20-amp/hour lithium pouch cell batteries and included regen braking as well as the original 5-speed transmission.

*The  
BMW Z3  
before its  
recent  
battery  
upgrade.*



Charlie started driving the Z3 in 2014, but by 2019, he was losing range, so he got a wrecked Leaf 30kWh pack and installed it. Last year, he decided to upgrade to Nissan's 40kWh pack, which is built in same form factor with adjusted chemistry for more energy capacity. He got the pack in January 2025 and stored it until he had time to install it last December.

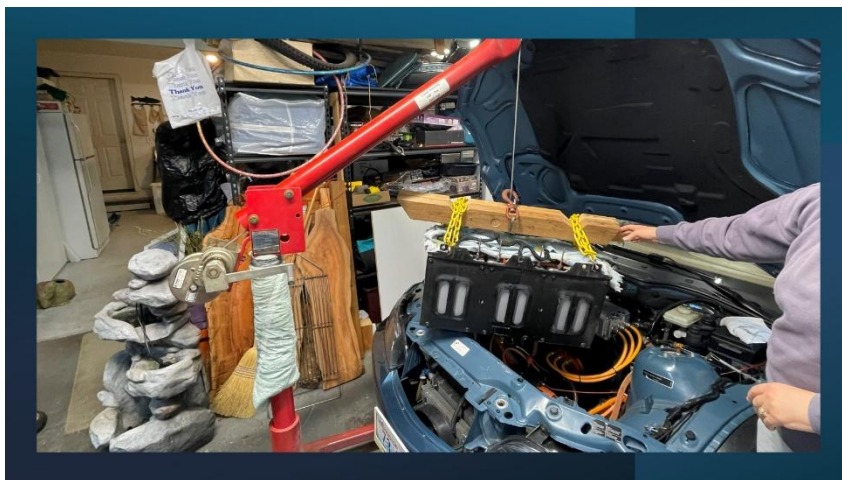
Even after nearly a year in storage, his BMS showed that all 96 cells were

pretty well balanced. He discharged some of the old battery energy before removing the cells from the car, which has some batteries in both the front and back. First, he disconnected the wiring harness that he cobbled together from the Leaf pack and removed BMS boards. Then he disconnected high-voltage lines. Finally, he got help to hoist out each 300-pound battery pack, which had built-in lift points.

Lithium pouch cells need some compression to keep them from swelling, so he measured first to make sure new cells were compressed the same with end plates. Next, he installed the new batteries in the box he custom welded and uncovered the contacts and cleaned them, as well as the bus bars.

Next was reinstalling the wiring harness and fuses. He used spacers to fill in around the Leaf cells, which are smaller than the original A123 cells used in the original conversion. He found that the new cells were not perfectly balanced, and it took a couple of days to balance the state of charge.

"I didn't get as much of an increase in charge as I expected" with the new pack at 90 percent state of health, Charlie said. One cell discharges much faster than the others, and the sag limits the car's performance. The continuing upgrades and balancing work will keep him busy.



*Lifting the 300-pound front-end battery pack out of the BMW  
Photo by Charlie Tsai*

# POLICY REPORT

## Clean energy policies under consideration in Olympia

The Washington State Legislature convened its 2026 session on Jan. 12, and SEVA is providing weekly e-mail updates that will outline EV policies under consideration this year. Most of the EV-related bills that did not advance last session were reintroduced this session. Few are likely to make progress this year, however, because in even years such as this, the legislative session is short, just 60 days, and concludes on March 12. Two of last year's Senate bills have been revived and scheduled for hearings, including the effort to find a solution to charging station vandalism. Here's a brief summary and information about how to comment and testify.

- New Senate Bill 6008 regarding incentives for grid-connected residential battery storage installation got its first hearing.
- Senate Bill 5746 creates an advisory committee on electric vehicle charger infrastructure property crime.
- Senate Bill 5750 establishes fees for charging privately owned electric vehicles at state facilities.
- House Bill 1721 and Senate Bill 5592 that would allow direct sales of electric vehicles by manufacturers have not yet been scheduled for hearings.
- House Bill 1921 and Senate Bill 5726 that would establish a Road Usage Charge in lieu of the annual EV registration fees have not yet been scheduled for hearings.

It takes just a minute to sign in with the online [Committee Sign In](#) portal to register your support or opposition to a bill, submit a comment for a public hearing, or sign up to testify online on a Senate or House bill. You also can call and e-mail your state senators and representatives directly - find your district, names and e-mail addresses at [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov).

## CLUB NEWS

**Seattle Electric Vehicle Association** meets at 7 p.m. the second Tuesday of every month at rotating locations. The next meeting is SEVA's Annual Meeting and Board Election on Tuesday, **Feb. 10, 2026** at a NEW location, the old Rainier Brewery building in south Seattle. Watch for more details to come. Board positions of Vice President and Secretary will be up for election to two-year terms. Gather to share cars at 6:30 p.m. Bring a friend. Open to everyone!

*Please share your club news as well as your personal journey into the world of electric driving, along with photos. SEVA would like to spotlight profiles of EV pioneers in our newsletter. Please send your stories and photos to [gvreamer@gmail.com](mailto:gvreamer@gmail.com)*

# SUPPORT

**Please support SEVA** and its outreach and advocacy activities with a donation. Your financial donation will help us reach more policymakers, funders and drivers statewide to advocate electric mobility, and will support expansion of our online resources. SEVA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and any contribution you make is fully tax-deductible. Here are four ways you can help:

1. Make a one-time online donation through PayPal at [DONATE](#).
2. You also can make a direct contribution by check. The check should be made out to SEVA and mailed to our SEVA Treasurer at: P.O. Box 92, Renton, WA 98057-0092.
3. Register and contribute annual dues as a member of SEVA at [MEMBERSHIP](#).
4. Join us! Bring yourself, your EV and your enthusiasm for driving electric to our monthly meetings, events and car shows and share your knowledge and passion.

# RESOURCES

SEVA aims to maintain a comprehensive list of the EV advocacy efforts ongoing in Washington, so we count on you to keep our lists and our website updated with the most current information. Following are the organizations and efforts we have compiled so far in Washington that have a presence online and on social media:

## Websites:

- Drive Electric Washington – [DriveElectricWA.org](http://DriveElectricWA.org)
- Seattle Electric Vehicle Association - [SeattleEVA.org](http://SeattleEVA.org)
- Plug-In America - [PlugInAmerica.org](http://PlugInAmerica.org)
- Electric Auto Association - [ElectricAuto.org](http://ElectricAuto.org)
- Forth - [ForthMobility.org](http://ForthMobility.org)
- Plugshare - [Plugshare.com](http://Plugshare.com)
- National Drive Electric Week - [DriveElectricWeek.org](http://DriveElectricWeek.org)
- Drive Electric Earth Day - [DriveElectricEarthDay.org](http://DriveElectricEarthDay.org)
- Plug In North Central Washington - [PlugInNCW.com](http://PlugInNCW.com)
- Coltura – [Coltura.org](http://Coltura.org)
- Thurston Climate Action Team - [ThurstonClimateAction.org](http://ThurstonClimateAction.org)
- Tesla Owners of Washington - [TeslaOwnersWA.org](http://TeslaOwnersWA.org)

## Social Media:

- [Northwest Tesla Owners](#)
- [Seattle Nissan Leaf Owners](#)
- [Seattle Tesla Model 3 Owners](#)

- [Seattle Electric Vehicle Association](#)
- [Seattle Tesla Model Y Owners](#)
- [Pierce County Electric Vehicle Information Exchange](#)
- [Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Tesla Club](#)
- [Inland NW Tesla Owners Group](#)
- [PNW Tesla](#)
- [Central Washington University EV Club](#)
- [Seattle Chevy Bolt/Bolt EUV Owners](#)
- [San Juan Islands Electric Vehicles](#)
- [Mid-Columbia Electric Vehicle Association](#)

Please share and distribute this newsletter widely within your EV networks and contacts. And please contribute your events, activities and stories, and SIGN UP to receive this free monthly newsletter by sending us an e-mail with your name, city, any affiliation and e-mail address to [gvreamer@gmail.com](mailto:gvreamer@gmail.com). You can unsubscribe at any time with an e-mail to the same address. Thank you for your support of sustainable electric transportation!