

# BUSINESS

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## RENTALS OF ELECTRIC CARS

# "Once you get them on the road, they are quite peppy."



Tim Prior shows what's under the hood of one of the Codas on his lot in Golden. The vehicle can travel up to 125 miles on a single electric charge. At 75 mph, it's closer to 100 miles. Photos by Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post



**GOLDEN»**

**L**ike any eager car dealer, Tim Prior talks quickly — and seriously — about the virtues of the vehicles on his lot.

“You’ll find them well-built. And once you get them on the road, they are quite peppy,” he says.

Prior is working an angle: to convince consumers who are used to renting a gas-fueled sedan of the power of an electric vehicle.

Last month, Prior launched one of the country’s first all-electric car share services. His company, eThos Electric Car Share, is providing Golden and metro Denver with American-made, all-electric sedans for short-term rental.

Golden Mayor Marjorie Sloan wishes Prior well as he competes in a market dominated by gas-engine vehicles.

“Golden takes its goal of producing a sustainable, green environment very seriously, and this business fits in nicely,” Sloan said. “This business is very forward-looking, just like Golden.”

EThos features sedans made by Coda Automotive that have a drivetrain produced by UQM Technologies in Longmont.

Coda Automotive filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2013 and exited the car

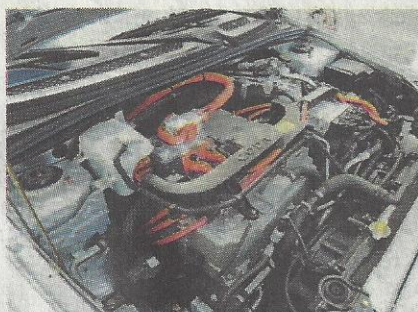
manufacturing business. Its automotive technology was acquired this year by Mullen Technologies, which rebranded the sedans as the Mullen 700e and upgraded the battery.

The Codas on Prior’s lot can travel up to 125 miles on one electric charge. At 75 mph, it’s closer to 100 miles.

Prior admits the toughest hurdle to renting a Coda is convincing drivers they are not trading their gas-powered sedan for a wimpy wannabe.

With an Environmental Protection Agency-rated 73 miles-per-gallon equivalent — or MPGe — an acceleration of zero to 60 in 9 seconds and a top speed of 84 mph, Codas are “green” vehicles that

**ELECTRIC » 17A**



The Coda has an EPA-rated 73 miles-per-gallon equivalent and an acceleration of zero to 60 mph in 9 seconds.

**73 MPGe**

EPA-rated miles-per-gallon equivalent of Coda

**Nine seconds**

Time to accelerate from zero to 60 mph

**84 mph**

Top speed

# ELECTRIC

«FROM 15A

don’t lack in performance, he said.

“Quiet is the new loud,” Prior said. “I love to see a driver’s face light up when they push on the accelerator for the first time.”

There is a lot of truth in what Prior says. A test drive reveals that a Coda from Prior’s lot easily scoots to 80 mph on the freeway and handles smoothly in tight Golden neighborhoods.

“Codas easily make the transition from gas to electric seamless for those wary of electric vehicles,” he said.

Currently, 12 people have paid the one-time sign-up fee of \$75, along with a \$75 returnable deposit. The annual membership renewal price is \$25, with regular opportunities to reduce hourly rates, which begin at \$7 per hour.

The more hours a member logs driving eThos vehicles, the lower the hourly rates, Prior said.

Four cars are on the lot, but if there is enough demand, Prior can bring in nine more.

Prior got interested in alternative fuels while working on his master’s degree in urban planning at the University of Wisconsin. He has family in the Denver area and saw Golden as the ideal spot for the business.

“There is an underlying greenness to the city,” he said. “There is the (Colorado) School of Mines nearby and an interest and awareness of energy issues.”

Sales of electric cars nearly doubled last year, and some forecasts see the annual number rising within the decade to 500,000 vehicles, besting today’s sales of the Toyota Camry.

Those sales are mostly spurred by the idea that electric cars cause less pollution. But that actually

depends on where the electricity comes from, said three research associates at the National Bureau of Economic Research in a recent piece in the Los Angeles Times.

They found that charging an electric car in the upper Midwest will generate more carbon dioxide per mile driven than the average car that burns gasoline.

However, electric cars in the western U.S. and Texas always generate lower emissions than even a hybrid, because natural gas tends to be used for generating electricity rather than coal in those regions.

The researchers said that although gasoline was the dominant fuel to power personal automobiles in the 20th century, electricity “is poised to make a comeback, and might yet power the transportation sector this century.”

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