

Edison's Pioneering Electric Vehicle Technical Center



Since the 19th century, when Thomas Alva Edison invented the light bulb and contributed to improvements in battery technology, the name Edison has been synonymous with electricity progress and innovation. Southern California Edison (SCE) carries on the pioneering legacy represented by that name as it leads its industry toward the widespread use of electric-drive technologies.

Such technologies – advanced batteries, hybrid or fuel cell cars and buses, or non-road equipment like forklifts – offer significant benefits as California and our nation work to lower greenhouse gas emissions, reduce dependence on foreign oil, and improve the quality of the air we breathe.

The following is a brief history of the electric-drive technology industry. In part, it is the story of SCE engineers helping to lead the way toward a sustainable transportation future.

1987: SCE's Research and Development Department explores opportunities for the fleet use of electric vehicles. The company leases a British-built electric-powered delivery van called the Griffon.

1988: SCE co-sponsors the first electric vehicle-focused national gathering, attracting a broad range of industries to address commercialization of this technology.

1991: SCE establishes its Electric Transportation Department. Also, in partnership with the Electric Power Research Institute, SCE helps form the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Working Committee to develop industry standards for creating charging infrastructure.

1993: SCE establishes its [Electric Vehicle Technical Center](#) (EVTC) in Pomona, Calif., to test and evaluate electric-drive systems, battery types and infrastructure options.

1994: SCE and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power team up with General Motors to launch the PrEView Drive Program, the first consumer field test of the Impact (later the EV1) electric vehicle.

1996: SCE's EVTC is selected as one of two U.S. Department of Energy test sites in the nation for evaluation of electric vehicle baseline performance, reliability and fleet operation.

1998: SCE's [electric vehicle fleet](#) passes the million-mile mark. By 2009, the fleet had logged more than 18 million miles, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 9,600 tons and pollutants by more than 2,200 tons.

2001: The EVTC receives a certificate of registration from the Quality Management Institute by fulfilling requirements for the International Standard Organization (ISO) 9001:1994 standard of quality. The Center later becomes ISO 9001 Registered.

2002: A program developed and managed by SCE and funded by the California Energy Commission reduces summer on-peak forklift and golf course vehicle battery charging by 9 megawatts, enough power to serve approximately 5,800 homes at a point in time.

2004: The Electric Vehicle Technical Center staff was first to convert a heavy-duty gasoline boom truck to a plug-in hybrid.



President Barack Obama visited the EVTC in March 2009 and announced stimulus funding for automotive battery development.

2006: SCE begins testing Daimler AG's Sprinter Van, the first plug-in hybrid-electric vehicle prototype from an original equipment manufacturer, to gain additional knowledge about this technology in real-world applications.

2007: [SCE and Ford Motor Company](#) announce a first-of-its-kind collaboration to examine the future of plug-in hybrid-electric vehicles as part of a complete vehicle, home and grid energy system.

2008: SCE develops its "[garage of the future](#)" evaluation platform, part of a fundamental convergence of electricity and transportation that can create more sustainable mobile and stationary energy storage systems.

2009: President Barack Obama recognizes the work of the Center, touring the facility during his first presidential visit to Southern California. SCE begins testing of automotive-grade Lithium-Ion batteries for stationary energy storage applications in SCE's grid.