An exciting modern way to commute. Save money, help the environment and turn some heads. Judie Squires reports on one mans exhilarating way of getting to work.

Peddling to work no sweat says Portugal Cove man

Judie Squires©2006

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There's nothing unusual about peddling to work. But Loyal Squires of Portugal Cove Newfoundland has found an easier way to commute 20 kilometers to his workplace in St. John's each morning.

With gas prices increasing, pollution causing global warming and the desire for a little exercise, Squires started researching alternatives to the automobile. *" I knew that there was no way I could bike a total of 40 kilometers a day,"* he said. *" On the way home it's uphill most of the way."*

Opening his garage door Squires reveals an exceptional looking mountain bike. *"It looks like a regular mountain bike,"* said squires. *" I can't wait for the weather to get a little better so that I can start riding again. I didn't want a granny scooter, when I saw this on the Internet I knew I had to have It."* He said with excitement. *"It's an Ebike."*

The world famous auto manufacturer Lee Iacocca created the 36-volt electric assist mountain bike. *"It rides just like a regular bike. You can pedal without the electric help if you want, but hit a hill or the tiring end of a long ride home and all it takes is a push of a button for instant power. The bike can average a speed of 25 kilometers, although downhill, I have reached speeds of almost 50 kilometers,"* Squires said with a grin on his face, recalling a time when he accelerated past a few professional cyclists.

The bike features a simple thumb throttle to activate the power supply, front suspension, as well as head and taillights. At $2000 fully equipped, it's no gift, but consider the benefits; clean, emission-free commuting, not to mention a better, environmentally friendly way to get to and from work or school and if you like attention, this sleek looking, fast moving bike will turn some heads. "*People love this bike, a few kids stopped to tell me that it was sick,"* he chuckles. *"I wasn't sure if that was good at first, but when the kids started asking me a lot of questions, I knew they were amazed with the bike.*

A full battery charge takes about 0.36 kWh of electrical energy, which at current electricity rates is about 4 cents. The battery cost is about $90 and it is supposed to be good for about 400 recharges. *"I ride the bike at least three days a week during the summer, it has saved a lot on the cost of gas."* Although the Ebike may seem a bit pricey, Squires said that he expects the bike will pay for itself in less than three years. *" You don't need to pay insurance or registration fees and with savings in fuel costs, it won't take long before the bike pays for itself."*

The battery is conventional lead-acid, which is a bit heavy, causing the bike to weigh over 70 lbs. Squires removes the battery from the bike, *"The bike can be quite heavy because of the battery, maybe in the future they will invent a better one, but the charging setup is convenient."* The battery pack can be removed or left in place for charging, the charger is built into the battery assembly. The power cord is hidden in a little compartment in the lower frame near the crank.

The NASA John H. Glenn Research Center reviewed the EV Global EBike SX as an update of the state of the art in hybrid electric bicycles. The report stated, "*The Ebike is seen as a way to reduce pollution in urban areas, reduce fossil fuel consumption, and reduce operating costs for transportation systems. The Ebike SX is a high performance, state of the art, ground up, hybrid electric bicycle. Unique features of the Ebike SX 36 V power system include the use of an efficient, 400 W, electric hub motor, and a 7-speed derailleur system that permits operation as fully electric, fully pedal, or a combination of the two. Other innovative features, such as regenerative braking through ultracapacitor energy storage, are planned. Regenerative braking recovers much of the kinetic energy of the vehicle during deceleration. The E-Bike is an inexpensive approach to advance the state of the art in hybrid technology in a practical application."*

Squires said that the bike was purchased and shipped from California. *"As far as I know it's the only one in the Province*." The Ebike certainly appears to be a fun, speedy, cost

efficient and practical alternative to gas powered automobiles. He hopes that more people will become interested in alternative ways of driving in the future.

Judie Squires
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Since 1999, Judie has been aggressively researching a wide range of subjects, particularly those pertaining to human health and environmental issues. Judie has written for local, regional and national publications.