



National Drive Electric Week

by Steve Banashek

On September 25, community members interested in electric vehicles gathered at a National Drive Electric Week (NDEW) event at Kenmore Middle School in Arlington.

NDEW is an annual, week-long nationwide celebration to increase public awareness of electric vehicles (EVs) and highlight the many benefits of electric cars, trucks, buses, motorcycles and more. At these events, EV owners display their cars and answer questions about driving electric. Events may also include EV rides and drives.

Potomac River Group (PRG) member Ruth Woollett organized the Arlington event and her hard work was evident in the participation of numerous EV owners and a wide selection of vehicles. The Sierra Club is a co-presenter of NDEW: Virginia Chapter Conservation Program Coordinator Cheri Conca helped with getting the word out and, along with Ruth, made sure the event ran smoothly.

The weather was sunny with comfortable temperatures and drew over 300 registrants representing a diverse range of ages, cultures, ethnicities and abilities. While the majority of attendees were from Arlington, they also came from Alexandria, Herndon, Washington DC and other localities. State Senator Barbara Favola and Arlington County Board Member Takis Karantonis were present as well.

The excellent variety of EVs included the Ford Mustang Mach-E, Volkswagen ID.4, Polestar 2, Nissan Leaf, Chevy Bolt, and Audi e-tron. And of course there were several Tesla EV owners who brought the Model 3, Model Y, and a Roadster to the mix. An electric bike, a Zero electric motorcycle, an electric lawn mower, and an EV home charger also made appearances. EV owners answered questions and talked about going electric, covering everything from features, chargers, and charging to the logistics of taking a trip in an EV.

Attendees sat in vehicles, looked under the hoods and took an occasional EV ride. An EV has a fraction of the parts of an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle and some EV models take

advantage of that by adding extra storage space under the hood in the form of a front trunk known as a frunk. Fewer parts, no engine oil, no transmission fluid and less complexity result in lower maintenance costs over the life of an EV as owners say goodbye to gas stations and oil changes. And of course instant acceleration makes EV driving fun.

It was a great event and a great day. There were numerous positive comments including one from a mom with two toddlers in tow: "It's so great to be able to come to one spot to see lots of different EVs rather than going to each dealer." Other attendees similarly commented about how convenient it was to see so many models in one place.

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