



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Forth to Receive DOE Funding for Clean Rural Shared Electric Mobility (CRuSE) Project.

The pilot project will provide electric vehicle carsharing service to residents, visitors and businesses in Hood River, Ore.

Portland, Ore. – [Forth](#) is pleased to announce that it will receive funding for the Clean Rural Shared Electric Mobility (CRuSE) Project from the [U.S. Department of Energy for Advanced Vehicle Technologies Research](#).

The Clean Rural Shared Electric Mobility (CRuSE) Project seeks to demonstrate that round trip plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) carsharing can serve rural communities while benefitting low-income residents and local businesses.

This project will be the first of its kind, bringing the carsharing model to rural communities, where private investment might otherwise never go. Forth hopes this project will demonstrate the feasibility of carsharing in rural areas while also providing cleaner and more efficient mobility options to Hood River and its visitors.

“I am thrilled to partner with the Hood River community to shape this project and provide learnings that can be applied in rural communities across the country,” said Kelly Yearick, Forth’s Program Manager on the project.

Roundtrip carsharing has been well established in many urban centers, but carsharing is virtually unknown outside of major urban centers. Rural and low-income communities can benefit most from carsharing services, due to lack of density to support traditional transit, biking, or other options.

Situated in a rural area of the Columbia Gorge, Hood River, Oregon will be the initial test site. With a combination of typical small-town living, nearby agricultural work and tourism, Hood River presents an ideal opportunity to test, assess, and hone how best to offer an electric carsharing service, in a rural setting, to benefit drivers from multiple sectors.

The CRuSE Project envisions a three-year demonstration program, with five PEVs stationed throughout Hood River at affordable housing sites, the city center, and tourist destinations. American Honda is loaning five post-lease Clarity EVs to the project. Envoy Technologies will provide the carsharing platform, enabling users to reserve and access vehicles via a smart phone, paying by the minute or hour, and returning the PEV to its home base.

As part of this project, Envoy will provide a Spanish translation of its app to appeal to diverse community members, alternate payment mechanisms to meet the needs of those without access to credit cards or bank accounts, and tiered pricing structures, enabling different prices to be charged to different user groups, enabling the potential for subsidies to be offered to qualified user groups.

The funding comes through the [Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#). The funding is to support the Energy Department's goals to strengthen national security, support American energy dominance, enable future economic growth, and increase transportation affordability for all Americans.

"At DOE, we support a broad portfolio of technologies, generating the knowledge needed for industry to further develop and commercialize affordable, secure, and reliable transportation systems," said Mark W. Menezes, U.S. Department of Energy Under Secretary of Energy.

Forth will work with the City of Hood River, Hood River Columbia Area Transit, the Port of Hood River and Ride Connection, along with several community organizations such as Columbia Cascade Housing Corporation (an affordable housing provider) and Mid-Columbia Economic Development District to assess transportation needs and establish Envoy carsharing at optimal parking locations. Charging installations will be facilitated by OpConnect. Pacific Power, the local utility, is providing matching funds to provide partnership and support.

"The CRuSE project is a great example of the power of partnership, innovative thinking and a big win for Hood River," says Cory Scott, Pacific Power Director of Customer Solutions. "It's vital that rural communities have access to and share in the benefits of electric transportation. This grant brings together a broad collation of partners that are all aligned around broadening access to electric vehicles and serving underrepresented populations."

The CRuSE Project's aim is to bring PEV carsharing services to underserved rural communities nationwide, providing rural America with improved transportation access, energy efficiency and environmental benefits at lower costs to users. The CRuSE Project is anticipated to launch in spring of 2020.

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ABOUT FORTH:

Forth is a nonprofit organization advancing electric, shared and smart transportation through innovation, demonstration, advocacy, and engagement. For more information, visit forthmobility.org.

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