



# ORCAS POWER & LIGHT COOPERATIVE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## OPALCO IS EV (ELECTRIC VEHICLE) READY

The automobile industry is producing a new generation of electric vehicles (EV) and your local electric cooperative is ready to help members keep them charged at home and in town. OPALCO has the capacity to bring electric vehicles onto the grid without major system improvements and can manage the additional load. In fact, OPALCO has ordered a Nissan Leaf electric car and hopes to be driving it all over the islands for local business trips beginning in January. OPALCO has installed new sophisticated charging stations on Lopez, San Juan and Orcas Islands—able to charge both Level One and Level Two type vehicles—and these stations can be expanded on by local business owners as demand grows.

**What do members need to know to get ready for electric vehicles?** Most of the existing electric cars use a “Level One” 120-volt charge from a standard household outlet; no modifications are required. The newest electric cars use a “Level Two” 240-volt charge and will require members to add a new circuit in their home electrical panel, and a plug similar to that used for an electric clothes dryer. Most plug-in hybrid electric cars take 4-6 hours to fully charge at Level One; battery electric cars take 12-24 hours for a full charge at Level One. Most battery electric vehicles will take only 3-6 hours to fully charge at Level Two. Check your owner’s manual for specific charging times and requirements for your electric vehicle.

**How do the new charging stations work?** The new ChargePoint stations are accessed by calling the number printed on the front of each unit. The phone call unlocks the unit for either Level One or Level Two charging. For an introductory period, OPALCO is offering the charge free of charge. Electric car owners can streamline their access and charging process with a ChargePass Smart Card to use across the national ChargePoint Network. Rates will be set based on OPALCO’s residential tariff (\$0.758/kWh), plus a 7.5% processing fee and a \$0.50 session fee. The three Gateway “mothership” units are located on:

- Orcas Island: south side of Island Market, near the barber shop
- San Juan Island: behind Key Bank
- Lopez Island: parking lot of the new Lopez Village Market

The new ChargePoint Gateway units are “mothership” chargers in that they have sophisticated Zigbee wireless communication capabilities to connect with the ChargePoint Network—and to other (less sophisticated, less expensive) units within a range of up to 150 yards. This opens up the potential for local

business owners to expand the number of units available near their business place as demand grows, and to benefit from the collections on the units.

For more information on OPALCO's Energy Services and EV readiness, go to [www.opalco.com](http://www.opalco.com). For more information on the ChargePoint Network, ChargePass Smart Cards and a map of charging locations throughout the country, go to: [www.mychargepoint.net](http://www.mychargepoint.net).

OPALCO is a member-owned cooperative electrical utility serving more than 11,000 members on 20 islands in San Juan County. OPALCO provides electricity that is 95% greenhouse-gas free and is predominately generated by hydro-electric plants. OPALCO was founded in 1937 to bring electricity to rural islanders.

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Photo caption: *OPALCO member Bill Wulff charges his electric car at the new ChargePoint station behind Island Market.*