

Valley gets \$200K grant for electric car planning

By Ben Keller

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A grant of \$200,000 will bring the San Joaquin Valley that much closer to becoming a reliable place to drive electric cars.

The grant, from the California Energy Commission, will help the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District as it decides where best to add charging stations for plug-in electric vehicles.

Another part of the plan will involve ways to streamline the permitting, installation and inspection of such stations, while educating consumers on their use and benefits, like reducing air pollution. Specifically, the plan will be used to create the "San Joaquin Valley Regional Plug-in Electric Vehicle Coordinating Council."

With help from the councils of governments of Fresno and San Joaquin counties and the associations of governments for Merced and Tulare counties, the council will develop a plan to promote and prepare all eight counties in the San Joaquin Valley for electric vehicle infrastructure.

AeroVironment, a private provider of electric vehicle technology, will also be involved in the planning.

The recent grant matches funding already committed to the plan, including \$50,000 from Air District and \$75,000 from the U.S. Department of Energy.

There are currently around 1,600 electric vehicle charging stations in California, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

