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AUTOMOTIVE

Tesla's Powerpack provides environmental alternative for power boost

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Example of Tesla Powerpack, courtesy of Tesla Motors

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

U.S. electric automaker Tesla is further expanding its brand into energy efficiency with a battery installment in California's power grid as it moves beyond automotive.

The energy efficient battery installment will soak up energy throughout the day and feed it back into the power grid. Tesla's battery storage facility was built in just three months and was inspired by an accident with Southern California Edison that sent thousands of tons of methane gas into the atmosphere.

"Although Tesla was initially developed as a car company first, they're bigger objective is to advance the technology of the battery through many different facets of industry," said Brett J. Levine, automobile consultant at Drive Anything. "In order for them to thrive as a company it makes the most sense and the smartest way to grow."

Battery powered

Tesla officially began operating the battery facility on Jan. 30 and can power four hours for more than 1,500 homes or 2,500 homes for an entire day in California. As a substitution for a peaker plant that leverages natural gas, Tesla's battery facility will remain dormant and kick on when needed to provide electricity.

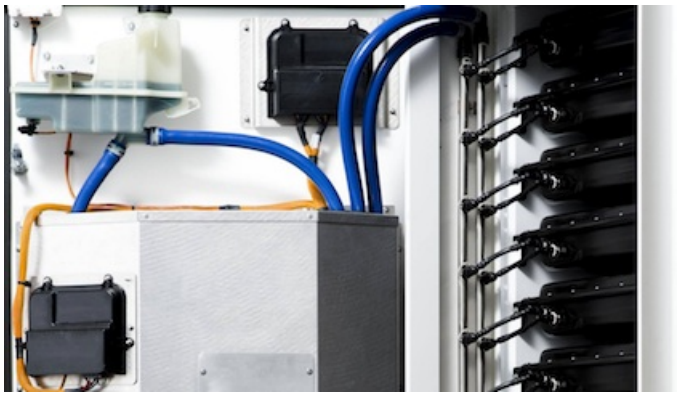
Tesla's Powerpack

It will be mostly be working in the evenings, when most consumers are home and using a lot of electricity. The Powerpack will mean fewer power shortage and reduction of greenhouse gases.

California's pollution makes this a significant location for the project. Tesla has also launched similar innovations around the state and the United States.

Tesla manufacturers the battery packs itself at its factory in Nevada. The manufacturer's long history within the auto industry has laid the groundwork for its portfolio within energy efficiency.

As clean energy innovation becomes more of sought after, Tesla is further pursuing technology in this area instead of just focusing on its auto manufacturing. By associating itself with all things energy, Tesla's branding implications will appeal to the audiences who are interested in environmental impact.



Tesla's Powerpack

Tesla claims its Powerpack is the largest operating lithium iron project. The facility was assembled within 94 days and developed over three months.

Tesla energy efficiency
The automaker has been continuously transitioning from an automotive brand to a more expansive sustainable energy brand.

Back in June, Tesla also made an offer to acquire SolarCity, an energy provider that designs, finances and installs solar power systems. The vertical integration of clean energy runs contra to the strategy of other automotive brands and signals a different kind of market outlook for Tesla (see more).

Now that electric cars are much more prevalent, Tesla is updating its Supercharging Program to a pay-to-charge model starting this year.

Since 2012, Tesla drivers have been able to charge their vehicles' batteries at complimentary charging stations at no cost. According to a blog entry posted on its Web site Nov. 7, Tesla is updating its policy to eliminate on-the-house charging (see more).

"The incredible research and development they have done over the past few years has been tremendous for not only The advancement of the automobile, but society as a whole," Mr. Levine said. "They will have a considerable impact on the auto and energy industries over the next 5 to 10 years and how we as human beings power our homes, cars, and everything in our lives."