

Incentives sweeten price for all-electric Nissan Leaf

March 30 2010, By Susan Carpenter



Nissan Leaf

The all-electric Nissan Leaf hatchback will cost \$32,780 when it hits showrooms in December, the Japanese automaker said Tuesday.

But government subsidies will make the price more attractive.

There's a federal tax credit of \$7,500 for [electric vehicles](#).

And Californians are eligible for an additional \$5,000 rebate through the state Air Resources Board.

That will take the base price for the standard Leaf, in California, to \$20,280.

The Leaf's price will be far less than the only other currently available pure-electric car on the market, the \$109,000 Tesla Roadster, which is a sport car.

Pricing for other upcoming [electric cars](#) -- including the [Chevrolet Volt](#), also due later this year -- hasn't been revealed.

To determine the Leaf's price, the company looked at other vehicles it felt customers would probably consider, including the gas-powered Honda Civic (\$22,255) and hybrid [Toyota Prius](#) (\$25,830), said Trisha Jung, director of electric-vehicle marketing for Nissan North America.

"Price is important. It's one of the favorite questions we've gotten over the past few months," Jung said. "We know consumers care about that."

She said the company is positioning the Leaf as "the first affordable, mass-market, [zero-emissions](#) electric car" and that it's "a great opportunity for Nissan to bring in new customers."

But it will not be a loss leader, Jung said. Nissan expects to make a profit off the Leaf.

The car will be available in two versions -- a standard ST model and the more premium SL for an additional \$940 that adds a backup camera and solar-panel spoiler to trickle-charge an accessory battery.

Both versions will be powered by a 24-kilowatt-hour, laminated [lithium-ion battery](#) pack that will allow the Leaf to travel 100 miles per charge and reach a top speed of 90 mph.

The ST and SL will each include three years of roadside assistance as well as a navigation system equipped with a real-time electric-vehicle [charging station](#) locator that will be updated as charging stations are built

throughout the nation.

Charging the Leaf to 80 percent of its capacity takes about 25 minutes, Jung said.

Nissan estimates the Leaf's five-year operating cost will be \$1,800 versus \$6,000 for a gas-powered car.

Those who choose to lease rather than buy the Leaf will also benefit from government incentives.

According to Nissan, the monthly lease on the car will be \$349 but in California an Air Resources Board rebate will reduce it to less than \$200.

About 85,000 individuals have registered on Nissan's U.S. Web site to receive updates about the product, the company said. Those on the list will be able to reserve a Leaf when Nissan launches its reservation system April 20.

The company hopes to have taken 20,000 reservations for the Leaf by December. Its current production capacity for the vehicle is 50,000 annually.

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