

# Ford's electric plans

July 18 2011, By Siel Ju

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When I think electric cars, I think the Nissan Leaf and Chevy Volt - then maybe Tesla and Fisker sports cars. But options for would-be electric car owners are fast expanding, and Ford is about to tap into the growing greener car market with a trio of environmentally friendly cars, including an all-electric vehicle.

That's what I learned at a conference put together by [Ford](#) last month in Dearborn, Mich. Along with a hundred or so other bloggers, I got to visit Ford's headquarters - and take part in a star-studded program with talks from Malcolm Gladwell, futurist Joel Garreau, and "actorvist" Ed Begley, Jr. - who spoke glowingly of Ford's foray into greener vehicles.

The most exciting development, of course, is the 2012 Ford Focus Electric, which I really want to test drive. This car will charge up in just three to four hours from a 240-volt [charging station](#) - and go about 100 miles on a full charge. That car is expected to start getting delivered late this year. The best part, in my opinion, is that Ford is electrifying a car that's already an established brand with owners and devotees, instead of building a new customer base for a new model from scratch.

Next year, Ford is also going to offer C-MAX Energi plug-in hybrid - which like the [Chevy Volt](#) will drive in all-electric mode for shorter distances, but also have a gas-powered option that's expected to extend the driving range to about 500 miles. The third car Ford will offer is the C-MAX Hybrid, which isn't electric at all, but is expected to have a better mpg than the 2011 Ford Fusion Hybrid, currently the most fuel-efficient sedan in America.

In his presentation, Begley emphasized how this trio of cars offers options for everyone. Because as we know, even if everyone suddenly decided they wanted to ditch their gas guzzlers for zero-emissions [electric vehicles](#), the infrastructure just isn't in place to let people charge up those efficient cars. I, for example, would love to get a [Ford Focus Electric](#) if I was picking between Ford's three new cars. But as an apartment dweller with nowhere to plug in a [car](#), the only greener Ford option that would work for me is the C-Max Hybrid.

The new cars weren't available for test drives, but I tried driving the 2011 Ford Fusion Hybrid as part of a contest to see which blogger could get the best miles per gallon by hypermiling. I thought I did pretty well when I achieved a 44.1 mpg on the contest course - only to find out the winner got 70-plus mpg! Maybe I'll get better with practice.

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