THREE WAYS TO CUT VEHICLE COSTS
ON YOUR CAMPUS

Utility vehicles on campus can reduce your fleet costs while balancing student and staff safety, crew performance and sustainability.

There was a time when utility vehicles (UTVs) on campus meant golf carts with accessories attached. Today, fleet managers, facilities directors and maintenance managers at institutions across the country are relying on the versatility and variety of purpose built utility and transportation vehicles to move people and materials all over campus - all with significant cost savings.

"The UTVs were much less expensive to purchase, operate, and insure than vans or shuttle buses would have been," says Chief Mechanic Charles Gettis of Georgia State University. "They require no fuel, less maintenance and they let us put fewer miles on our public safety cars."

So how can you do the same on your campus? Here are three tips.

1. OPT FOR UTILITY VEHICLES BUILT SPECIFICALLY TO REPLACE SMALL TRUCKS

The best of today's UTVs are purpose-built for work, with commanding powertrains, semi-independent rear suspension systems and aluminum frames that stop rust in its tracks. These long-lasting vehicles can do the work of pickups at a fraction of the cost to purchase and maintain. UTVs can also access narrow paths, drive across lawns, and pull right up to work sites. This makes them perfect on campus, where parking and pedestrian-only zones are expanding.

When evaluating UTVs, attention to build quality and design is key. Many vehicles are engineered for recreation, but sold into commercial markets. They aren't durable enough for day-to-day worksites, and they have high speeds. Although the speeds can be controlled with speed settings, the suspension systems on these cars are designed for fun, not for hauling. Additionally, the frames are generally made of steel, which will erode when exposed to water, fertilizers and lawn chemicals.

Well-built UTVs are less expensive to purchase, maintain, insure and operate than full-size trucks. Most of the maintenance can be done on site, or through a local dealer. In fact, it costs about one-half to one-third as much to buy and operate a UTV as it does a truck.

Replacing just one full-size vehicle with a utility vehicle can save you thousands of dollars over the lifetime of the vehicle.

2. USE TASK-SPECIFIC VEHICLES FOR EVERYDAY APPLICATIONS

Until recently, facilities managers had to buy generic vehicles and add accessories or pay for customization to get vehicles configured for dedicated applications. Today there are utility vehicles specifically engineered and designed to streamline common jobs, allowing a significant boost on the return of investment.

These are just a few of the task-specific vehicle types available today.

Grounds Maintenance. These vehicles include turf-friendly tires, beds up to six feet long, hose reels with automatic rewind, and automatic bed lifts. Some can carry a combined ¾ ton load, meaning both materials and crew can be hauled to every grounds keeping task.

Ambulances. These typically are sized (small, medium or heavy-duty) to meet the expected campus use and placement. Heavy-duty models are designed to move through tight spaces and over unimproved terrain. These applications have multiple seating for staff and injured, stretchers and lockable storage boxes.

ADA-compliant Transport. These vehicles are designed to meet state and federal ADA compliance rules. Typically, they are versatile four-passenger vehicles with a kneeling suspension systems that can carry a driver, a passenger in a wheelchair and two additional passengers. Key features include a wheelchair seat belt and four auto-locking restraints, and an easy-lift ramp that unfolds for quick loading and unloading. If the ramp folds and safely locks into place when not in use, these vehicles can also be used to move larger, bulky items.

Refuse Removal. These vehicles are designed with heavy duty beds, high dump hoppers, and electric bed lifts that speed trash removal.

Security. These compact vehicles meet the demands of your security team with enclosed cabs, light packages, a tight turning radius with high ground clearance and a robust safety options. They expand access to narrow paths and other tight areas that are "no-go zones" for bigger vehicles.

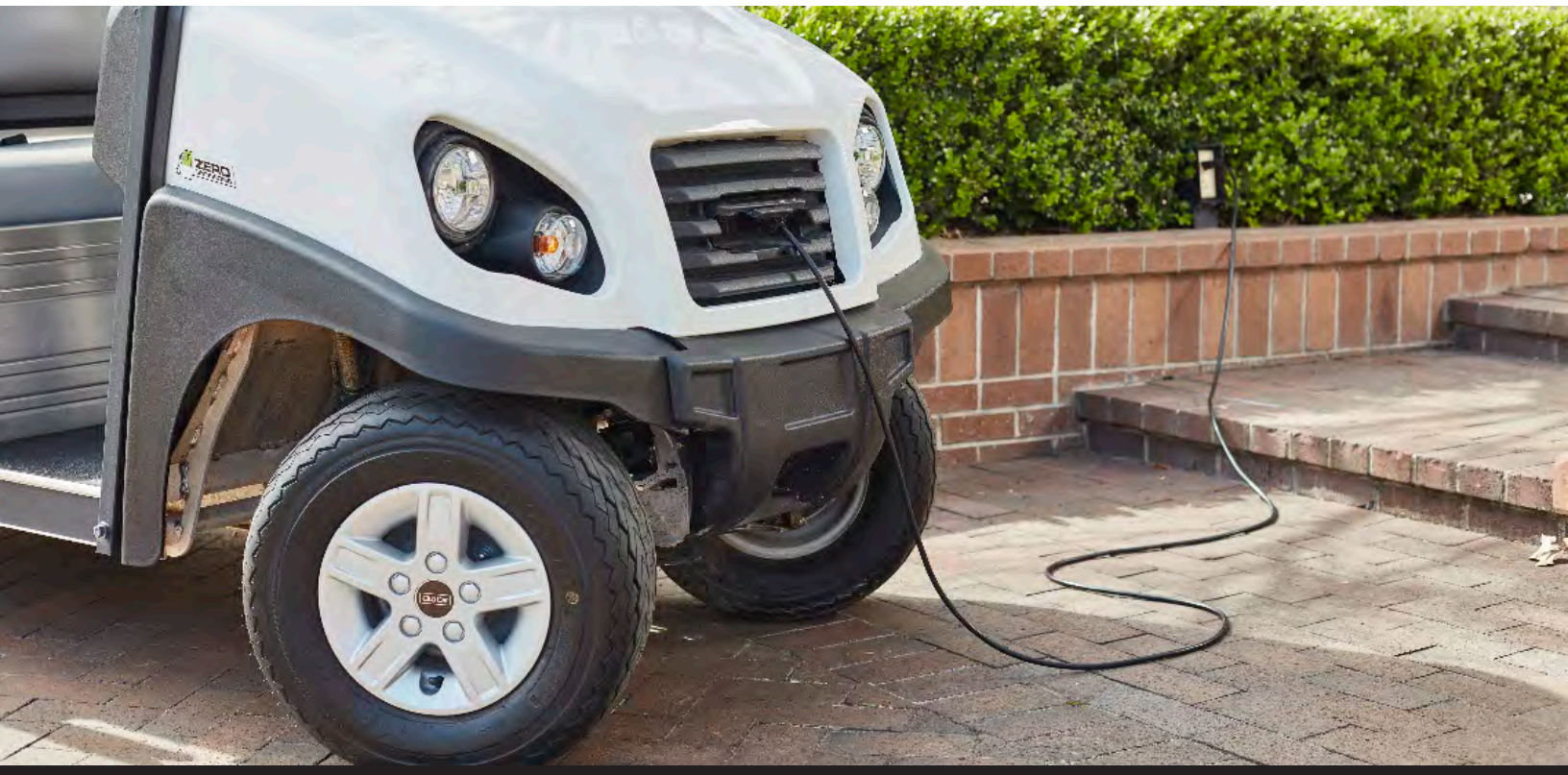
3. GO ELECTRIC

Electric vehicles can also improve ROI, if you do your due diligence and ensure the infrastructure is in place and that you obtain the right vehicle for the task. You don't want to sacrifice purpose or reliability for sustainability.

The electric utility vehicle market is growing and changing quickly, and deciding which technologies to deploy can be a challenge. Keep it simple, evaluate how far the vehicle will need to travel, how much weight it will need to be able to move and determine if there will be a place to charge it every day when not in use. You don't want to overspend on costly technologies that diminish your ROI if you don't really need them. Cost effective solutions such as on board chargers with retracting reels and single point watering systems for batteries are two examples of how to maximize the value of your electric utility vehicles. Spending more for extended range batteries for a vehicle that needs to go 40 miles a day would be a wise choice. Spending thousands of dollars on advanced battery technologies for a vehicle that only travels 20 miles a day would be an example of how to ruin your ROI.

Your campus probably already has a sustainability plan in place, and going electric is just one way you can achieve those goals. A recent University of Michigan study found that the average cost of driving a new gas vehicle is more than twice as much as that of an electric. As a rule of thumb, the required fuel economy that gasoline vehicles would need to exceed to be less expensive than driving an electric vehicle is 57.6 mpg.

To learn more about how our utility vehicles can help improve your campus operations, or help meet your sustainability goals, visit us here.



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