



WHEELIN': MyGo Pasadena participant Leslie Stotlar boards her Giant Suede-E electric bike to leave the Weststart/Calstart office in Pasadena on Friday. Weststart/Calstart backs MyGo, a program that offers \$500 toward an electric bike. RICHARD LUI / CORRESPONDENT

Pedaling for the planet

By JAZMINE TOUTON
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PASADENA — To Leslie Stotlar, who teaches environmental science at Marshall Fundamental High School, the offer of \$500 toward buying an electric bicycle was an offer too good to pass up.

The 33-year-old mother of three pledges to ride her teal Giant Suede-E electric bike everywhere she goes this month as a participant in a local nonprofit's effort to subsidize bike ownership and get people out of their cars during daily commutes.

Subsidized by MyGo Pasadena, Stotlar bought her \$1,000 bike for \$500 three months ago, and now that she's racked up nearly 50 miles she says she's sold.

"With my e-bike I fear no hill," Stotlar joked, after pedaling her 2-year-old

daughter on a trailer to look at prospective preschools.

MyGo's program is backed by Weststart/Calstart, a Pasadena-based nonprofit that promotes greener transportation.

MyGo offers \$500 toward an electric bike and up to \$30 per month to members who agree to ride their bikes to the Metro Gold Line at least two days a week.

Whitney Pitkanen, MyGo project manager, said the program has 26 members who already own a bike and ride it to the light-rail station, and 150 others are interested.

Once a biker signs an agreement on MyGo's Web page, mygo-pasadena.com, he or she can take it to a participating dealer and get a new electric bike.

Riders must pedal to start the bikes, but with some momentum they can twist

the throttle and cruise up to 18 miles per hour. Pedaling can add extra speed.

Craig Renwick of Pasadena, who works at 20th Century Fox, starts riding his bike at 6:30 a.m. to the Del Mar station and ends up at Fox Studios in Century City about 90 minutes later.

Renwick said it takes him about the same time to drive to work in a car. Taking the train allows him to read the morning paper and exercise as he covers the remaining eight miles to work, he said.

"Riding the streets of L.A. on a bicycle is a dangerous proposition," Renwick said.

Still, he said he won't give up and even purchased an air-horn to warn less bicycle-conscious motorists.

Pitkanen said the only other similar electric bike program in the country is in Santa Cruz, and acknowledges biking to work can take commitment.

"It does take a leap of faith to get out of the car," she said.

She said the program, which started in March 2006, is offering a number of new incentives to get people to take that leap. One improvement is the addition of eight shared-key bike lockers at Metro stations, free to MyGo members.

In the coming weeks the program will add two new bikes to its vehicles; a \$750 Curry Technology folding bike and a high-powered electric scooter from EnVironmental Motors in Glendale.

Renwick said he's been trying to get people in his company to get involved in the program, especially since News Corporation and 20th Century Fox announced they would try to be carbon neutral by 2010.

"I've pestered them," he said. "I think we could form a bicycle revolution."