



## UGL Services introduces e-ride electric vehicles to its fleet

*Makes \$5,000 grant to the University of Miami to purchase first vehicle...*

UGL Services is a longstanding facilities management sustainability leader. In 2004 it was the first to introduce a programmatic approach to sustainability with the award-winning UGL Services GreenClean program. It has since extended its sustainability efforts to include maintenance and operations, energy management, customer recycling/education and other programs.

UGL Services works closely with leading sustainability partners and vendors for supplies and equipment as well as transportation and energy solutions.

One of the greater sustainability challenges has been finding environmentally sound utility vehicles that are rugged and reliable enough for day-in, day-out use. UGL Services' utility vehicles are typically employed on corporate or college campuses in stop and go situations – the least energy efficient and most pollution-heavy applications.

### Researching Electric Vehicles

In researching possible solutions, John Kennedy, UGL Services Vice President of Operations Support, ran across [e-ride Industries](#), a manufacturer of all-electric utility vehicles at an industry tradeshow. He, along with Greg Zifcak, UGL Services Purchasing Program Manager, subsequently visited the e-ride factory in Princeton, Minnesota to meet the principals, including e-ride Founder and Owner John Herou, to learn more about their electric utility vehicles.

E-ride's small trucks are classified as Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEVs) by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which means that they are four-wheel vehicles that have top speeds of 20 to 25 mph and weigh less than 2500 lbs. They are street-legal on roads with posted speed limits of less than 35 mph and have ranges of 55 to 60 miles on a single charge with recharging times of about 8 hrs. E-ride's models, the EXV2 (two-passenger) and EXV4 (four-passenger) can be ordered in a multitude of configurations for use in corporate or campus settings by security departments, facility maintenance or trade service groups.

Kennedy and Zifcak were impressed with the manufacturing quality, the overall ruggedness of the chassis and body as well as e-ride's innovative approach to the mechanical components using all American parts. The e-ride team accomplished the difficult task of designing multi-purpose vehicles that have specially-designed braking, battery charging and other systems but still use off-the-shelf parts. For instance, e-ride worked with Interstate Batteries to power the vehicles with batteries that can be ordered through any of its

### PROJECT SUMMARY

**Project:** *Research electric vehicles to promote sustainability*

**Customer:** *University of Miami*

**Situation:** *University required replacement of trash pickup truck*

**UGL Services response:**  
*Recommended e-ride NEV*

**Results:** *UM is projected to save more than \$5,500 and reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions by 20,000 pounds per year.*

distributors. Similarly, virtually all components, such as tires, rims, electrical and mechanical components, are widely available in the aftermarket through auto parts stores.

After touring the plant, Kennedy and Zifcak conducted an extensive test drive and determined that the e-ride vehicles would be a viable sustainability option for many of UGL Services' large corporate and education customers.

### **Introducing the e-ride – Offering a grant**

Following the inspection trip, Kennedy and Zifcak developed the specifications that UGL Services would require and Zifcak negotiated two versions of the e-ride that would meet the company's operational needs. They then invited e-ride to the UGL Services Sustainability Tradeshow in Washington, DC in April 2010. John Herou and his team brought two specially-configured vehicles that were shown to UGL Services operations staff attendees, as well as invited customers.

Also at the show, UGL Services announced a \$5,000 grant towards the purchase of the first e-ride unit to be deployed at a customer site.

### **University of Miami benefits**

The University of Miami was able to take advantage of the offer. UM had been using an old pickup truck for trash removal on its medical campus. The truck was destroyed in an electrical fire and UGL Services General Manager Charles Sackett suggested that they consider the e-ride as a replacement vehicle. The University had experimented with some low-cost, imported NEVs but had been disappointed by their performance and maintenance needs.

Zifcak arranged a demo test drive at UM. Looking forward, UM and UGL Services tested how the vehicles could support landscaping and maintenance crews, how they would pull trailers and other equipment, and how the overall operations and recharging process would work in practice. The equipment performed well and the decision was made to go ahead with the replacement.

UGL Services made the promised \$5,000 grant and UM ordered an EXV2 pickup with a caged bed for trash. The vehicle was put in service in January 2011 and has been living up to expectations. The EXV2 is projected to save more than \$5,500 and further reducing the carbon footprint on the campus by eliminating 20,000 pounds of CO<sup>2</sup> per year. Maintenance is also expected to be considerably lower, partly because the new vehicle is replacing an old truck, but also because of the elimination of the complex, multi-component gas engine that would require frequent maintenance, and the availability of off-the-shelf parts.

