

...the actual batteries will not be manufactured in the United States but in Saft's factory in Nersac, France.

To play catch-up, the Obama administration's \$787 billion stimulus package authorized the Department of Energy to spend \$2 billion on grants for advanced battery research. In addition, would-be American battery manufacturers can partake of the \$25 billion Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) loan program launched last September when the panic over the economic meltdown first took off.

Worldwide, this manufacturing optimistically adds up to—at most—enough to produce up to 2 million PHEVs per year by 2015. In 2007, automakers globally produced 70 million vehicles powered by standard internal combustion

are expected to boost the average cost of each vehicle by as much \$10,000, gasoline will have to cost more than \$5 per gallon before PHEVs make economic sense to most drivers. Of course, generous federal subsidies can help overcome this financial disincentive. The government could also double or triple gasoline prices by imposing a substantial tax.

In 2006, an activist "documentary" about GM's ill-fated foray a decade ago into battery-powered cars, the EV1, asked, "Who killed the electric car?" The filmmaker offered an elaborate conspiracy theory involving oil companies, but the truth is that clunky inefficient batteries did the electric car in. And unless there is a spectacular breakthrough in electricity storage technology, clunky expensive batteries will likely kill the electric car this time, too. ♡



the **FLY** ←11

Drink Locally

Fly recently learned that the plight of downtown San Jose's legendary **FABER'S CYCLERY** has reached new dimensions of stagnation. Proprietor **ALEX LARIVIERE** has yet to find a white knight to sponsor his proposal for the place. "I want to build a bicycle museum/beer garden and it would have a facility that would basically be promoting bicycles, but kind of community center, but more for adults rather than kids," he explains. "I'm looking for a sponsor to help me fix the building."

LaRiviere says he expects the upgrades to tip the scales around a million samolians, since the circa-1884 historic building needs a foundation and won't be insurable unless a steel cage is constructed inside the place to hold it up. That, along with the soil contamination plaguing the grounds means some serious dough is required. But LaRiviere is plodding along with his museum idea, which includes new awnings and artists' murals. "I have all the stuff to do it—as far as the bicycles, the antiques and the know-how," he said. "I just don't have the funding to be able to repair the building." According to LaRiviere, a noted San Jose real estate broker offered \$250,000 for the property 20 months ago, fully intending to fix the building, but could not hammer out a deal with the landlord. ♡