



July 23, 2020

City Adds First Zero-Emission Electric Riding Lawn Mowers

You will soon be seeing a unique new lawn mower cutting the grass on public properties. In early 2020, the City received a \$24,000 DNR Clean Diesel Grant to support purchasing two electric zero-emission riding lawn mowers and they have recently been received. This federally funded program reduces air pollution by removing older diesel engines across the state and nation.

An often-overlooked segment of air pollution is the lawn and garden engine (LGE) equipment category. One commonly cited EPA study found that a 3hp lawn mower emits the same air pollution as 11 cars driving at 55 mph.¹ In pursuit of the City's 2050 carbon-neutral goal, over 557 metric tons of CO₂ will be eliminated using these new electric mowers compared to the older diesel lawn mowers. This improves the health of our environment, the people riding the mowers, as well as the public using City green spaces.

Businesses and home owners can take similar action by purchasing commercially available electric lawn mowers. Electric power is cheaper to fuel than gasoline or diesel, quieter and offers maintenance benefits with fewer moving parts and no oil changes. Total City fuel savings over a ten-year period for one electric lawn mower is expected at around \$10,000. Electricity is also becoming more renewable-based with solar and wind. Xcel Energy currently provides about 30% renewable electricity and has a 60% goal by 2030 towards their 2050 100% carbon-free electricity aspiration. Since their electric grid is getting cleaner, the City will continue to transition its fleet to electric alternatives with a goal of replacing 15% of all vehicles by 2030.

Keep an eye out this summer for the new green-painted electric lawn mowers. They will be stationed at Forest Hill Cemetery and at Jeffers Road Park but will be seen at other public properties mowing. One even features an overhead solar-powered canopy so you can't miss it!

For interviews and more information about these new electric lawn mowers please contact Steven Thompson at 715-839-4962.

For more information about the City of Eau Claire's Renewable Energy Action Plan visit <https://www.eauclairewi.gov/government/our-divisions/renewable-energy-action-plan>

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¹ <https://www.ecoequipmentsupply.com/why-electric/environmental-benefits-electric-mowers/>