

Hampton Inn & Suites

Sarasota/Bradenton Airport



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## Hampton Reveals Newest Plugin Stations

By Jacob Ogles

Marcia Griffiths' "Electric Slide" played Wednesday at a ribbon-ceremony for the newest car-charging stations in Southwest Florida. Green paint outlined four parking spaces specially set aside for electric vehicles in the parking lot of the Hampton Inn and Suites Sarasota Bradenton Airport.

"Today is an exciting day and a milestone day for our hotel," said Eric Collin, executive vice president for Finergy Development, the company that built the Hilton-owned hotel.

Finergy said the hotel has been on the cutting edge of environmental awareness since it was first constructed to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification standards. The business already has special spaces for low-mileage vehicles, but now is specifically wooing electric plug-in cars.

A parade of electric vehicles came to the event, with local dealerships driving in a Chevrolet Volt, Nissan Leaf, Tesla Roadster and Fisker Karma, the last vehicle a newly-released luxury conveyance. Of course,

the first car to park in the space was a more humble converted all-electric S-10 Durango driven to the ribbon-cutting by Anna Maria resident Tom Stockebrand.

The charging stations were installed by EcoTechnologies, which has been installing similar plug-in locations in Southwest Florida as part of a Department of Energy grant program. Other stations are already running in Anna Maria, the Lakewood Ranch visitors' center and Manatee Memorial Hospital. EcoTechnologies president Andrew Tanner gleefully pulled up a smart phone application which could help drivers find their way to any of the stations. The bulk of stations, including those at the Hampton Inn and Suites, are free to use and open to the public.

"It's all about helping with range anxiety," Tanner said. "Knowing more of these stations are out there will then give people confidence to go to electric vehicles."