



Feb 12, 2014 20:45 GMT

North East electric cab fleet becomes biggest in country

Phoenix Taxis, based in Blyth, Northumberland has purchased an extra three Nissan Leafs boosting its electric taxi fleet from four to seven.

Managing director, Alex Hurst, said: “We have always been driven by a passion to reduce our carbon footprint and have done this consistently through the years by investing in new technology and exploring alternative fuel resources to petrol or diesel.

“We purchased our first electric car, the Nissan Leaf, last year and it has been such a success we are aiming to have at least 15 by summer next year. As the first taxi company in the north east to use electric cars our ultimate ambition is to convert our entire fleet to purely electric vehicles.”

Currently the firm’s 155-strong fleet is made up of liquid petroleum gas converted vehicles and hybrids, as well as the electric cars.

Alex said: “The Nissan Leaf is the perfect choice for us. Not only are they easy to drive and offer our passengers an enjoyable experience, the cost benefits it offers are massive.

“Running electric vehicles has had an noticeable positive impact on our business in the short time we’ve been running them. Some of the North East’s largest businesses have decided to go with us for their taxi needs and the extra business has increased turnover by almost £400,000. Our prediction for this year is to break the £3 million turnover mark for the first time and we’re well on our way to smashing that barrier. Our recent quarterly figures show that by the end of October we should be closer to the £3.5 million mark than the £3 million mark. As a result of the boost in business we’ve taken on 12

extra staff this year in new or existing positions, specifically to deal with the demand of the new business we've won. We've invested £50,000 in vehicle charge point technology and altogether £100,000 in EV's alone and another £150,000 in hybrid vehicles."

Barry Beeston, Nissan GB corporate sales director, commented: "Fuel is the chief running cost for taxis so the LEAF is the ideal vehicle for any company looking to cut its running costs and emissions at the point of use. As the national charging network continues to expand, we look forward to continuing our strong relationship with Phoenix Taxis to eventually develop their 100% electric fleet."

The company has also increased the number of electric vehicle charging points at its headquarters and now have two rapid chargers and six standard chargers. The points are not just available to Phoenix vehicles – anyone with an electric vehicle can use them. Alex said: "The electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the north east is fantastic. Drivers are never too far away from a charge point and we're delighted to be part of it and look forward to seeing it develop even further."

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Editor's notes

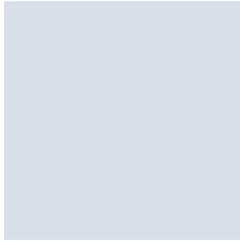
About Phoenix Taxis

Phoenix Taxis and Mini Coaches was established in 1990. Based in Blyth, Northumberland, it has the largest fleet of taxis and coaches in Northumberland. A family run business dedicated to the community, Phoenix has expanded from their traditional customer Blyth base to provide taxi and coach services across Northumberland, Tyneside and Newcastle. With over 160 vehicles on the road including four-seat taxis and nine 53-seat coaches, the Phoenix fleet is the most diverse fleet in the region. Phoenix is proud to have one of the "greenest" taxi fleets in the United Kingdom. The majority of its cars run on Liquid Petroleum Gas or are hybrid vehicles, rather than diesel.

They acquired the North East's first electric taxi in 2012.

Visit the website at <http://www.phoenixtaxi.net>

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