

## Under the Hood September 2021

I suspect that some of the tests are still in the courts, but in May Washington Governor Inslee approved most of a serious carbon bill. He did, however, veto that part of the bill that would require the complete phase out of gasoline/diesel auto sales by 2030. Although Inslee indicated he fully supports the complete phase out of non-electric vehicle sales by 2030, this provision was tied to other provisions that he found not workable. I expect the 2030 date to come up in the future in a different bill. The 2030 phase out of non-electric vehicle sales is far more aggressive than almost anywhere else in the world, whether we are talking about State laws or stated intents by the vehicle manufacturers. It reminds me a bit about the City of Seattle council members all seemingly shocked that some homes are still being heated with natural gas, or that some of us would actually cook with gas. This new Washington carbon bill came almost the same day as the annual Puget Sound Energy report that graphically shows the source of all the utilities' electricity fuel mix. For 2019 (this report always follows the actual year by about 1.5 years), PSE reports that 35% of the fuel is coal, and 31% is natural gas, for a total of 66% of the electricity source is carbon based. 9% is wind, and only 1% from solar. PSE has announced their Beyond Net Zero Carbon plan is to provide net zero carbon electricity by 2045. I see two points worth mentioning. First, note that although the Inslee goal is all new vehicles would be electric by 2030, that is a full 15 years before PSE's plan would be zero carbon, which still means those electric vehicles would be charged with carbon burning electricity. There are experts on both sides arguing whether it is better to burn the carbon at the electric source or in the vehicles. The second point is that the PSE plan has the key words "NET ZERO CARBON". I suspect this doesn't mean that no carbon will be used in generating the electricity. Rather it means that they will buy carbon credits to off-set the carbon used by generating plants. In fact, the PSE report touts all the carbon off-sets that are already being purchased by PSE customers. One of the main reported carbon off-sets was improved forest management which will consume some of the carbon dioxide. While this is commendable, I don't think it is being really honest with the consumer. When I hear that PSE is going to be carbon zero, my initial thought is that they are saying all the electricity will come from hydro, solar, nuclear, wind, tidal or similar totally non-carbon sources. Read the PSE report and I think you will come to the same conclusion that this is not the case. Even worse is the fact that PSE's own data shows that locally we are somewhat going backward. In my March 2019 column, I quote that PSE data as showing that in both 2016 & 2017, PSE only used carbon to create 59% of the required energy. In 2019, we have used 10% more carbon source fuels for our electrical needs than in 2016. Is this because our population has grown, increasing demand faster than our growth of wind/solar generation? Western Washington is a hotbed of electric vehicles compared to many parts of the country. Is it because the growth of electric vehicles and the resulting PSE demand has necessitated even more power generation from the coal and natural gas plants? I sometimes wonder if our rule makers even pay attention to data from our own electric suppliers. It is obvious that at least locally we are a long way from being able to power 100% electric vehicles with carbon free electricity. For now, a final word on vehicle electrification. About 2 weeks after the Washington State carbon bill was passed, the CEO of Ford announced that it planned for fully 40% of all vehicle production (no asterisk exempting pickups or SUVs) would be fully electric by 2030. Again 40% electric vehicles are far from the goal of 100% of all vehicles sold being electric. The cynic in me did notice that the day of the Ford announcement, that Ford stock took a 7% upward bounce. Will most of these announcements just fade away without being fully implemented, or by 2029 will we be hearing all the reasons that these great plans just couldn't be done?

Increased enforcement, ever increasing insurance rates and increased awareness have all reduced our national DUI statistics. I have a co-worker who spent a night in a cell after being arrested for DUI and he tells me it was not a pleasant experience. DUI numbers have gone down every year recently and yet nearly 30% of all motor-vehicle deaths in the last two years are related to alcohol impairment. I recently reviewed some interesting statistics generated by Insurify using data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Obviously, the driver generates the DUI but this data was reviewing what those impaired drivers were driving. The RAM 2500 pickup had the worst statistic with 4.5% of the drivers having at least one DUI. Almost scary was the conclusion that of the top 10 vehicles, 6 were pickups. I know that after reading this summary I will look a bit closer at the pickup next to me on the road. I also suspect that law enforcement personnel have this data. I am pleased to report that Corvette drivers did NOT make the top 10. The vehicle least likely to be driven impaired was the Toyota RAV4, with only 0.6% of the drivers having a DUI citation.

I have written before about the auction site Bring a Trailer (BAT). In May of this year, a 1988 C4 went on the block on BAT. The car only had 2,000 miles and had been in a museum for the past 30 years. The bidding was very spirited and reached a high bid of \$500,000, but the auction reserve was not met. This was no regular C4. This was the storied Project Sledgehammer by Calloway. Reeves Calloway specially built this C4 for a high speed run. The Chevy engine was rated at 880 hp and 772 lb-ft torque. The body was modified with the prototype Calloway Aerobody kit. In October of 1988, they drove the car from the Calloway facility in Connecticut to the 7.5-mile-high speed oval in Ohio. Once there, driver John Lingenfelter (another well-known Corvette fraternity name) reached a top speed of 254.76 mph. Then they turned around and drove the C4 back home. The C4 was equipped with special Goodyear tires which were reclaimed by Goodyear at the end of the trip. Today, when one of the auto magazines does a high-speed test, it seems every manufacturer has half a dozen engineers in attendance and full truck of equipment and spare parts. Sledgehammer was driven 1,000 miles each way to the track. I understand the current owner took Sledgehammer to the Mecum-Kissimmee auction 7 years ago. At Mecum, the bid did not meet reserve and the owner took Sledgehammer home. Looks like the owner has once again decided to sell, so keep your eye on the winter car auctions for Sledgehammer. Obviously, the owner wants more than \$500k, but that seems to be what the market thinks Sledgehammer is worth.