

Bicycle Retailer

AND INDUSTRY NEWS

ELECTRIC BIKE REPORT

Precious cargo

Spencer Harris and daughter Roselle try out an Xtracycle e-cargo bike at the inaugural Electric Bike Expo.

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Photo by Doug McClellan

Traveling e-bike expo zips off to a promising start

Consumer attendance falls short of goal, but premiere event in Tempe, Arizona, translates into immediate sales for brands and local retailers.

Photos and story by Doug McClellan

TEMPE, Ariz. — Neither an unseasonal chill, an out-of-the-way venue nor an NFL playoff game kept consumers away from the inaugural Electric Bike Expo.

Expo visitors demoed more than 100 e-bikes from 18 exhibiting brands — all for free.

Most consumers came back smiling after taking a few laps on the enclosed test track, which included a long ramp to simulate a climb and, for the more ambitious, a couple of mountain bike obstacles.

But the happiest people may have been the industry executives and staffers who worked the Expo.

"It's been a fantastic event. The industry needs this," said Ken Miner, sales director for Haibike USA. "The thing about e-bikes is that you've got to get people on them."

The Tempe event, Jan. 15-17, was the first of six Electric Bike Expos that will take place each month through June in key Western cities. Because it was the first, no one knew quite what to expect.

But after 1,184 visitors turned out over the 2½-day event — and Phoenix-area retailers reported a spike in e-bike sales — exhibitors could uncross their fingers, even though attendance was shy of the Expo's goal of 1,500.

"This has been a dynamic event," said Adam Rand, president of EVantage USA, which builds e-bikes for Polaris. "All of the different manufacturers kind of feed off each other."

"We are thrilled. It's a wonderful turnout," said Taylor Jackson of Focus, which had e-bikes from its Focus, Gazelle and Kalkhoff brands on hand. "For us as marketers, it's hard to put in a two-dimensional ad what this experience is all about."

He said the event had validated the Expo organizers' concept.

"From what we've seen in Tempe, we are on board for anything they're doing — East Coast, West Coast, wherever," Jackson said.

E-Newbies. The company behind the Electric Bike Expos, Extra Energy Services North America, didn't even exist a year ago.

Its founders, veterans of trade shows and the e-bike industry, sketched out the concept for the Expos at last year's Taipei Cycle Show (*see related story, page 26*). Within weeks, the group had incorporated, signed a deal with Interbike to run the test track at the Vegas trade show, and sold out the first six consumer events.

"We are trying to reach the average person who is not really a cyclist. They can take an electric bike and get into cycling," said Pete Prebus, one of the Extra Energy founders.

More than half of the Tempe visitors, in fact, were newbies who had never ridden an e-bike.

Prebus, who also publishes the online Electric Bike Report, said the Expos are intended to be fun, casual and accessible. Attendance is free, visitors can demo all the bikes they want, and exhibitors aren't



After he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Jerry Nanson went shopping for an e-bike "because I need to keep moving."

allowed to sell anything on-site.

"We want people to experience these bikes and talk to manufacturers' reps and dealers, but not feel that pressure to buy," he said.

Instead, exhibitors directed consumers to their local retailers, often with rebate coupons or other incentives in hand. Some retailers reported an immediate boost from Expo visitors.

One consumer went from the Expo directly to Archer's Bikes, a Haibike distributor, and plunked down a deposit for a full-suspension 29er that won't even be available until late February.

"That's a \$3,500 MSRP bike. You can't complain about a sale like that on a lazy Sunday," co-owner Joshua Archer said.

Archer said he knew of six Expo visitors who had visited the store on the same day. Many bought merchandise while others made appointments to return. "We were expecting zero," he said.

Accell North America gave a \$100 rebate coupon

to any Expo visitor who demoed a Raleigh or iZip e-bike. Accell emails the coupons to the consumers and fulfills the rebates so they don't affect the retailer.

Accell's Rob Kaplan, vice president of sales and marketing, said just a few extra sales would make the Expos worthwhile. "The number we'd be high-fiving each other would be 10 bikes per event," he said.

Kevin Miller from Landis Cyclery said he expected to sell several Trek e-bikes as a direct result of the Expo.

"I believe that we'll probably have at least three to four sales of e-bikes from this event. I'm hoping for more, but if I get four it's a huge success," Miller said.

Landis Cyclery is a Trek dealer, but had decided to carry the Trek e-bike line only two weeks before the Expo.

"The response has been overwhelming," Miller said. "I'm blown away by how many people have come out to this."

Electric Bike Report

Petri dish. It wasn't just the sales prospects that persuaded exhibitors to sign up for the Expos. Extra Energy is also promising to provide exhibitors with an unprecedented amount of information about the consumers who attend each Expo and ride their bikes.

The Expo attaches RFID tags to every demo bike and on every visitor's badge. Sensors on the track can then determine who is riding which bike.

After the event, each exhibitor will receive a list of all visitors who rode one of their bikes, including contact information. The exhibitor will know not only who rode which model, but which bikes the consumer rode immediately before and immediately after.

"This is gold in the pocket of a product manager," said Sascha Nachtnebel, an Extra Energy partner who is one of the developers of the tracking system. For visitors, the system is invisible and unobtrusive.

"This is all passive. They just register, and nobody cares or nobody knows that there is an RFID chip integrated into their badge," he said.

Ray Verhelst, the CEO of Extra Energy, said American brands are hungry for this kind of data about their customers.

"This is a petri dish, because there is no organization in the electric bike industry that has actually



Haibike's Ken Miner, who ticked off the benefits of an e-mountain bike to a visitor, called the Electric Bike Expo a "fantastic event."



Yuba founder Benjamin Sarrazin scored not one, but two television interviews with "Good Morning Arizona."

done B2C market research in the North American market," Verhelst said.

Commuters and cargo. Trek, which signed on early as one of the three main Expo sponsors, is treating the events as a research tool as much as a sales opportunity.

Instead of just a sales team, Trek is staffing the Expos with product designers and marketers.

"Our plan is, for every team member that touches these bikes in any way, to have them at one of these events," said Emily Bremer, marketing manager for Trek's pavement and women's lines.

Erik Eagleman, an industrial designer who oversees the research and development of Trek's e-bikes, said insights from the Expos will help inform future models.

"This is the best test lab you can get because it is direct contact with the customer. We can ask the questions that we need to know to design the bikes," Eagleman said. "We sat down this morning with my sketchbook and wrote down all of the takeaways from yesterday, and I'm sure we'll have more tomorrow."

Prebus said the median age of Tempe visitors was 49 — a little younger than the baby boomer crowd

that e-bike brands typically market to.

"That's pretty interesting because obviously we've got some of the younger crowd who's getting into this," he said.

Verhelst said he expects the median age to drop in cities such as San Diego and Portland, Oregon.

By gender, 70 percent of attendees were male and 30 percent female. More than half of the Tempe visitors said they lived within five miles of work, making them attractive candidates for a sales pitch based on commuting by e-bike.

In fact, Prebus said, commuter-style e-bikes were the most demoed at the Expo.

Perhaps more of a surprise is that e-cargo bikes were No. 2, ahead of electric mountain bikes. Verhelst said Yuba was the second-most-ridden brand at the Expo, even though it only had a few Spicy Curry e-cargo bikes on hand.

No lack of Lycra. While many Expo visitors were clearly casual cyclists, there was also plenty of Lycra on display.

Dolly Emerson rode her Trek Madone to the Expo with members of her road bike club, the Corvairs (their motto: "Unsafe at Any Speed").

She'd never ridden an e-bike before, but was so delighted by an urban model from Trek that she de-

Expo organizer plans events for Eastern US

LAS VEGAS — The Electric Bike Expo isn't ignoring the Eastern United States, CEO Ray Verhelst said. It's just trying to work out the timing, logistics and expense involved in expanding the consumer demos to another part of the country.

Verhelst said Extra Energy Services North America, which organizes the Expos, has been deluged by requests for events in the Midwest and Eastern U.S. — and complaints that Extra Energy hasn't already scheduled dates east of the Mississippi River.

Expo organizers are polling exhibitors to pin down potential cities and dates outside of the West. Verhelst said the Expo is considering launching three Eastern Expos in late fall, after Interbike, with the series potentially finishing in Florida.

"The question of whether we do something to test the waters in the East is going to be dictated by a couple of major manufacturers that are East Coast-based, and whether or not we can find the locations and pull the details together in time to do something in the late fall," he said.

Expo organizers are already sketching out a more ambitious program for 2017. Verhelst said they plan to expand the Western demos from six events to nine, and possibly as many as 12.

The Expo also expects to launch a series of events in the Midwest and East that would run simultaneously with many of the Western events.

He said there's also interest in hosting Expos in Vancouver, British Columbia, Toronto and Montréal.
— Doug McClellan

Electric Bike Report



Dolly Emerson rides a Madone, but she told Trek's Darren Snyder that she liked the company's e-city bikes so much she wanted to buy two.

cided to buy one for her husband.

Then she reconsidered. "I'm probably going to buy two of these, because my husband and I are going to be fighting over it."

Dusty Moore and Kathleen McNamara spent two days at the Expo, looking for a bike that McNamara could ride to work.

"This young lady commutes 10 miles a day. She's never driven a car," Moore said. "We're looking for a commuting bike that's nice for her."

He added that he wouldn't mind one for himself. "I really like the Kalkhoff — it's a sweet bike. Smooth," he said. "Those Haibikes are real sweet, too."

On the track, Jerry Nanson, whose majestic white beard parted farther apart the faster he rode, took several turns on a Spicy Curry. Nanson said he had recently been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and wanted an e-bike to help "keep moving."

"I like this long thing," he said. "But I don't like the price tag."

Tough competition. Organizers acknowledged that the Tempe venue was not ideal. Set on a parking lot at the Tempe Diablo Stadium, the spring training ground for the L.A. Angels, the Expo was hard to find and was far from organic pedestrian or cycling traffic.

Expo organizers had selected the location to piggyback on the IBD Summit, which took place at an adjoining resort.

Attendance fell sharply after dark — as did the temperature. The Expo also had to compete with an Arizona Cardinals playoff game on its second night.

Future Expos are slated for well-trafficked locations, Prebus said. The San Diego Expo on Feb. 26-28, for example, will take place at Liberty Station, a shopping and entertainment complex close to downtown.

Verhelst said he is expecting a bigger turnout in San Diego, since many bike brands are based nearby in Southern California. After Tempe, exhibitors realize they can use the Expos to reach out to retailers as well as consumers.

"I think every company is going to step up their own game to get dealers and more consumers in there," he said.

The San Diego event should feature more educational events for consumers. The Expo is working with the California Bicycle Coalition and hopes to attract legislators and government officials as well as consumers.

Tempo Bicycles is donating a bike to be raffled off, with the proceeds benefiting local charities.

Although the Expo is sold out of exhibition space for bike brands, Verhelst said he is eager to attract accessories companies, such as car rack, trailer, light and saddle brands that can show how consumers can customize their e-bikes.

"Eighty percent of an electric bike has nothing to do with the electronics. They are traditional bike parts," he said.

In spite of the inevitable first-time glitches in Tempe, many exhibitors said the Electric Bike Expos could be a lifeline for the American e-bike market.

"At the end of the day, this thing has to work," Accell's Kaplan said. "And early indications are that it is working." **BRAIN**

Upcoming Electric Bike Expos

San Diego
Liberty Station
Feb. 26-28

Houston
Rice University
March 11-13

Palo Alto, California
Stanford Shopping Center
April 22-24

Portland, Oregon
Location to be announced
May 20-22

Denver
June
Dates and location to be announced

For more information, visit
www.electricbike-expo.com.



Retailer Andy Roberts came from Georgia to scope out e-bikes like this electrified recumbent.

E-bike retail market slowly takes root in Phoenix

Photos and story by Doug McClellan

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — As owner of a dental lab, Sully Samartzis has made a lot of teeth in his career. But after “15 years and 20,000 teeth” he decided it was time for a job with a little more variety. “It’s always the same 32 teeth,” he said.

In October, Samartzis opened EZ Pedals, an e-IBD, along a downtown Scottsdale street of galleries, gift shops and cafés that is heavily trafficked by tourists.

That makes him a rarity in the Phoenix metro area. Despite its fast-growing population of about 4.4 million and its lack of cold weather, Phoenix doesn’t have much of an e-bike market. Given its size and climate, e-bike brand managers say greater Phoenix really is a desert.

Up the street from EZ Pedals is a Pedego retailer. Elsewhere across the “Valley of the Sun,” e-bike retailers tend to be small and, like EZ Pedals, new.

In downtown Phoenix, The Velo sells Felt and Faraday e-bikes along with road and other urban bikes. In Mesa, a Phoenix suburb, Archer’s Bikes sells Prodeco Tech and Magnum, and just picked up Haibike. Both shops have been open only a year.

Sun Cyclery, a long-established Phoenix IBD, sells retrofit bikes using kits from Lectric Cycles of Phoenix.

But most mainline IBDs are treading cautiously.

Trek, for instance, is one of the primary sponsors of the Electric Bike Expo series. But until two weeks before the Phoenix event, no Trek dealer in the region stocked its electric line.

That changed when Landis Cyclery, which has been selling bicycles since 1912, stepped up to make a commitment to the line. Landis is carrying the Trek e-bikes in one of its four locations, although they will be available to all if requested.

Co-owner Dick Landis, a grandson of the company’s founder, wasn’t making any promises about the category.

“I’m a typical bike shop guy,” Landis said, as he took a quiet walk around the Expo grounds to scope out the crowds. He’s cautious about making changes for a store that has been selling bikes for more than 100 years.

Landis said it “remains to be seen” how deeply the chain will go into e-bikes. “We haven’t sold one,” he noted. (One of his on-site employees said he expected several sales to come out of the event.)

Still, Landis said the Expo crowd intrigued him.

“I’m surprised by how many cyclists are here,” he said, pointing to the abundance of cycling jerseys and shorts among other visitors who probably hadn’t been on a bike in a while.



Sully Samartzis opened EZ Pedals in October. In the background are his studio photographs of the store’s Vintage Electric e-bike.



Tim O'Donnell, manager of the Global Bikes store in Chandler, has put 700 miles on his own Raleigh e-bike.

Another mainline IBD, Global Bikes, is also stepping cautiously into electric bikes.

Global’s flagship location in Chandler stocks Specialized and Raleigh. As a Raleigh dealer, manager Tim O’Donnell said it was a natural fit to begin carrying the Raleigh e-bike line when it came out last year.

He said Global has sold five of the bikes, often to customers who already own a Raleigh.

Unlike many IBD employees, O’Donnell is an in-store champion of e-bikes: He figures he has racked up 700 miles on his own Raleigh Tekoa-iE, which he uses to commute to two jobs and to go shopping.

“I actually have a basket on mine. I can ride up to my local Wal-Mart corner store and I walk it through the aisles and

fill up my basket. Fry’s also lets me walk it through the store,” he said.

Customers who buy an e-bike typically come in specifically looking for one.

“Nine times out of 10 they find us on the Internet first. They search for electric bikes or motorized bikes and come across the fact that Global is a Raleigh dealer,” he said.

In January, Global started carrying the Specialized Turbo. O’Donnell said he expects that Global will begin carrying Specialized’s e-mountain bike line when it comes to market this year.

Jason Boles, owner of The Velo, which caters to a younger, urban audience, says e-bikes can make cycling more pleasant in the scorching summer heat.

“Being part of the downtown culture, riding a bike in the middle of summer

isn’t always the best option,” Boles said. “But riding an e-bike, I’m not going to sweat.”

The store has sold five e-bikes since it opened a year ago. “It’s not as many as we would like,” he said. “But five, at four to five thousand a pop, that’s not bad.”

In Scottsdale, Samartzis is trying to figure out how to turn the steady pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk into sales. Passers-by often stop to stare at the Vintage Electric e-bike in the storefront window, which looks like a classic motorcycle.

EZ Pedals carries primarily Easy Motion bikes from BH, plus Stromer. Samartzis said he chose bikes that have batteries built into the downtubes because they have a lower center of gravity and are easier to handle, especially for older riders.

Step-through frames have been his store’s biggest sellers, but he’s also looking to appeal to younger millennials who are choosing to live in the city and may not own cars.

Samartzis said one of his biggest challenges as a retailer is marketing, something his dental lab didn’t need to worry about.

“There are a million ways to market. It’s gotten almost too difficult,” he said. “It’s like having too many channels on TV, and none of them really gives you anything good.”

While Samartzis has hopes of supplying rental fleets to local resorts, for now he’s focused on getting locals and snowbirds in to try his bikes.

“I’m trying to be ahead of the game,” he said. “I just hope I’m not too far ahead.” **BRAIN**

Electric Bike Expo grows from napkin sketch to reality

By Doug McClellan

TEMPE, Ariz. — The Electric Bike Expo began, as all good ideas are supposed to begin, with a sketch on a napkin.

Last March at the Taipei Cycle Show, Ray Verhelst and Pete Prebus were sitting in the ExtraEnergy booth with the organization's founder, Hannes Neupert, and others.

"We started to talk about how we could bring to life a little bit of what Hannes has been doing since the mid-'90s in Germany, and create an Americanized version of the trade show and experiential marketing," Verhelst said.

Neupert, an early evangelist for e-bikes, created ExtraEnergy.org in 1993. ExtraEnergy manages e-bike test tracks at the Taipei and Eurobike shows and puts on consumer demos across Germany, and also publishes an extensive consumer review of e-bikes on the German market.

Verhelst and Prebus saw a potential for the ExtraEnergy model in the United States. And they knew that Interbike needed a new concept for an e-bike test track, because construction at the Mandalay Bay was going to take away the parking lot that Interbike had been using.

Within days, Verhelst, Prebus and others had sketched out a plan for an indoor test track at Interbike that they could then adapt for a series of consumer demos on the road.

They quickly pitched it to Interbike executives and key e-bike suppliers. Within a few weeks they had the backing they needed to proceed.

"We drew this on a napkin, to launching it officially on June 1, to having it sold out by August, and then running our first program at Interbike," Verhelst said.

The Interbike test track, called The Circuit, hosted some 8,750 test rides during the show.

To launch the Electric Bike Expo,

Verhelst turned to a group of longtime acquaintances.

Verhelst had been a senior official at GES, the Las Vegas trade show producer, and had helped produce Comdex and other big trade shows. He more recently had been a consultant for a big Chinese lithium battery manufacturer, helping the company expand internationally.

He knew Bill Sell, now the Expo's sales officer, who had been vice president and general manager of Comdex — once the world's second-largest computer trade show.

Prebus, who is in charge of marketing for the Expos, publishes the online Electric Bike Report, which covers e-bike news and reviews for consumers.

The Americans called their company Extra Energy Services North America and originally expected that it would be closely integrated with the German association.

But as the Americans developed their plans, they began to diverge from the Extra Energy concept. The North American company now shares a name with its German counterpart but little else.

"As we started off, it gave us a direction. But what's needed in the U.S. market is very different from the German framework," Sell said. "What we've created here is much broader and much more in depth. We go deeper into the technology."

To handle the event technology, they brought in two German software engineers, Sascha Nachtnebel and Jochen Greiner, co-founders of greenfinder.de, a German comparison shopping guide for e-bikes.

Greenfinder.de has assembled a huge database of nearly 10,000 e-bike models from 390 brands that consumers can use to shop and find retailers.

For the Electric Bike Expo, Nachtnebel and Greiner developed a system that unobtrusively tracks consumers as they take test rides.



The group behind the Electric Bike Expos (from left): Jochen Greiner, Sascha Nachtnebel, Ray Verhelst, Bill Sell, Pete Prebus and Greg Zaralides

Combined with the demographic information they collect from every Expo visitor at registration, the Expo can provide the brands with an in-depth look at the people who are trying out their bikes.

For exhibitors, the data was a big selling point.

"For most of the brands that we pitched the expo to, when we mentioned the market research they were excited," Prebus said.

"They go nuts," Sell added. "They know nothing about who's got what. The numbers are just not out there."

Bosch quickly came on board as the Expo's presenting sponsor, and Trek signed on as the track sponsor. Tempo is the event's charity sponsor.

Verhelst said the timing was perfect. Following the big growth of electric bike sales in Europe, many well-established brands are turning to the U.S.

"The most important thing that they're bringing with them is finance, organization, sales and marketing channels, and they're giving legitimate guar-

antees behind the product," he said. "You have brands showing up that are very successful in Europe, are cash rich, and have the opportunity to delve into this market."

But to succeed in the U.S., brands have to get consumers to ride their e-bikes since few are familiar with them. They can only reach a handful of customers at a time at traditional retailer demos.

"The best way to change the attitude, the opinions and the acceptance in the market was to get people riding these in a nonconfrontational, non-sales-pressure environment," Verhelst said.

Unlike a retailer demo, the Expos let consumers try many different e-bikes at one event on one course.

"At an IBD, they're not going to have 85 different models. They're not going to have the identical course where they can take the same ramp or the same hill, and keep trying it until they get used to it or decide they don't like it," Sell said. **BRAIN**

Consumer-direct Bulls Bikes pursues IBD channel for electrics

Photos and story by Doug McClellan

LYNWOOD, Calif. — He has no retailers on board, and even if he did he won't have any bikes to send them until March. But Fernando Endara is already using the Electric Bike Expos to introduce American consumers — and, he hopes, retailers — to the Bulls e-bike line.

Endara, who runs Bulls Bikes USA with his wife, Sharon Yu, the company's CEO, introduced conventional Bulls bikes at Sea Otter last year. They are sold consumer-direct through the company's website.

The Bulls e-bike line is different — it will be sold only through IBDs and e-IBDs.

"No online," Endara said. "It's going to be like two business units."

In the U.S., Bulls is just another European brand that a few cyclists may be vaguely familiar with. But it's much better known in Europe because it is the house brand of ZEG, the big and influential German dealer association.

Bulls will launch nine e-bike models in the U.S., covering the main categories. All feature aluminum frames and mid-drive motors. Endara expects to have them in stock in March.

Bulls hopes to distinguish itself by being the first brand to launch e-bikes in the U.S. that are equipped with a Brose mid-drive motor. Five of its models use

Brose, while four models use a mid-drive system from Bosch, the market leader.

Brose, which like Bosch is a major German automotive supplier, is a few steps behind Bosch in establishing itself as a supplier of e-bike systems.

But it is starting to pick up key customers. In addition to Bulls, Specialized is also spec'ing Brose motors on its new line of e-mountain bikes that should arrive at retail this year. A few high-end European brands are also offering Brose bikes.

The Brose 250-watt motor is quiet and offers significantly higher torque than most e-bike drives. It's also more design-friendly, because the motor can be rotated on the frame at several angles.

The Brose-equipped Bulls e-bikes come with batteries from BMZ, another German manufacturer. Technical training and support will be handled by BMZ's U.S. offices on the East Coast and by Bulls in Los Angeles.

The Bulls models include the Sturm-vogel E Evo, a retro-looking city bike; the Cross Lite E urban bike, which comes in a step-through model as well; the Monster ES fat bike; and several mountain bikes with front or full suspension, in 27.5-inch and 29-inch wheel sizes.

Three of the mountain bike models use oversized downtubes that completely enclose the battery for an integrated appearance.

US e-bike owners riding long and often, Bosch survey finds

By Doug McClellan

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. — When Bosch surveyed Americans who ride conventional bikes and electric bikes, it uncovered a trove of useful demographic information about the growing e-bike market.

But perhaps the most powerful finding is that e-bike owners ride their bikes much more often, and travel longer distances, than people who ride conventional bikes. E-bike owners said they ride an average of 3.5 days a week, compared with one day a week for conventional bike owners.

"I think that's the most important result from our survey," said Jonathan Weinert, sales and marketing manager for Bosch eBike Systems in the United States. "We had heard this from many dealers. We kind of knew it to be true but we didn't have a way to quantify it."

Bosch, the big German automobile supplier, has become the dominant supplier of high-end electric bike motors in Europe and is looking to extend its reach in the United States. The company sells mid-drive motor systems.

Because Bosch has a presence in many consumer markets (think washing machines and power tools), it typically conducts extensive market research when it enters new fields.

Bosch conducted the online national survey last fall of 800 consumers, about evenly divided between owners of e-bikes and conventional bikes. It also surveyed retailers and brands, as well as members of the public.

About half of conventional bike owners said they rode once a month or less. Yet nearly three-fourths of e-bike owners rode at least two to three times a week. A third said they rode almost daily.

Weinert said results like these could help persuade IBDs to get off the fence

about investing in electric bikes.

"It's also a powerful message to government to support e-bikes, because they can help governments like California reach their goals of low-carbon, car-free transportation," he said. "California has a goal to triple bicycling by 2020. Here you go — if you could get more people out on e-bikes, you can really increase the number of trips."

The survey was important because there was little information available on the American market, said Claudia Wasko, who heads the Bosch eBike office in the United States.

"We are very experienced in the European market," Wasko said. "We know exactly what is our target audience, what is the average age, and what kind of effect an e-bike has in comparison with a

traditional bike."

But the U.S. was a blank slate, she said. "As no data has been available, we decided to do our own market research."

In many ways, the survey supported the often-heard argument that the U.S. market is like Europe was five years ago.

U.S. e-bike buyers are typically baby boomers, Wasko and Weinert said. In the Bosch survey, 59 percent of e-bike owners were between the ages of 50 and 69.

That used to be true in Europe, but the booming popularity of e-mountain bikes there is steadily driving down the average age of e-bike consumers.

"In Europe, the baby boomers are still the bread and butter of the market. But we were surprised that, two years ago, we started seeing this uptick in younger riders," Weinert said. "One rea-

son is the popularity of the e-mountain bike is really picking up, and younger people are embracing this segment because it's cool."

A third of American e-bike owners said they used their bike for recreation and exercise, while an additional 20 percent used it to commute.

Wasko said U.S. consumers have one advantage over their European counterparts. Because the high-end e-bike market originated in Europe, consumers lived through a rapid changes in e-bike technology.

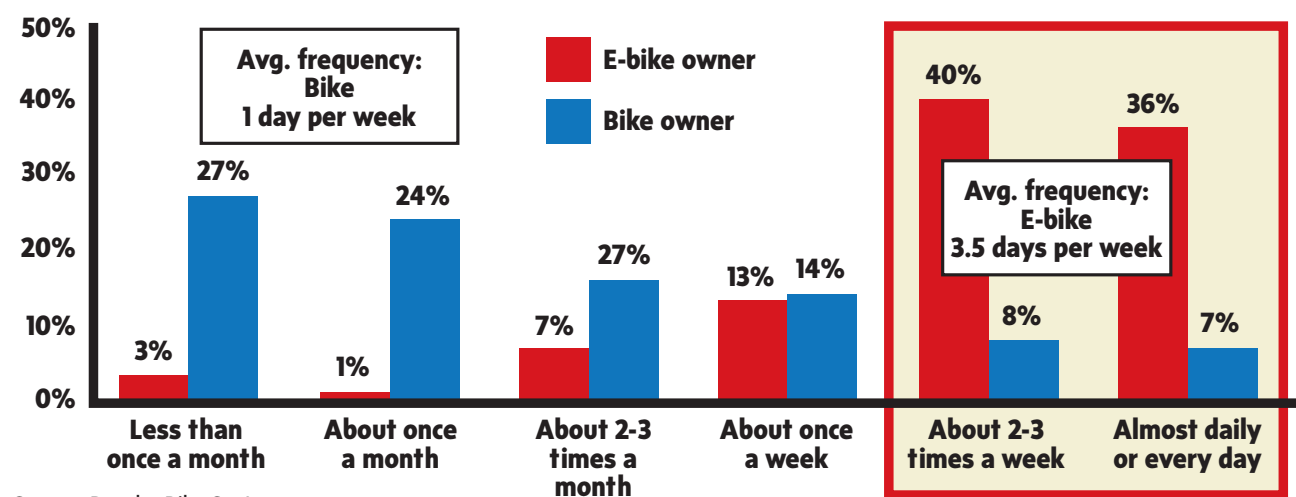
But because e-bikes are just getting started in the U.S., Americans don't have to wait for the technology to evolve.

"The potential to grow in the U.S. is huge because now everything is available," she said. **BRAIN**

How often do they ride?

A Bosch survey found that Americans who own e-bikes ride three times more frequently than those who own conventional bikes.

During the time(s) of year you ride your bike or e-bike, how often do you ride?



Source: Bosch eBike Systems



Fernando Endara is bringing Bulls e-bikes to the U.S. this spring and will sell them only through retailers.

Because ZEG is so big in Europe, Endara said it is able to negotiate favorable terms with suppliers like Brose and Bosch.

"We carry both of the best drive systems out there. So it's just a matter of time to get Bulls to IBDs," he said. "We have a premium product at a very good price."

Bulls plans to focus initially on the West Coast and will concentrate its marketing in Oregon, California, Colorado and Utah. But it's willing to accept retailers from elsewhere.

"If someone comes from Florida or New York and wants to carry our bikes, that's fine," he said.

Endara, from Venezuela, grew up in a family that imported shoes to South America.

He and Yu built a business importing power tools to Latin America. Nine years ago, they became the first to export Bulls bicycles outside of Europe, and now

handle distribution for Bulls in Ecuador, Chile, Mexico and Paraguay.

Breaking into the U.S., though, is a very different matter.

"It's a huge market," Endara said. But success in the U.S. will also help sales in the other countries.

"What sells in the U.S. sells in Latin America. Being here in the U.S. is pushing our sales in Latin America," he said.

Endara was featured in *Bicycle Retailer* last year in a story about European brands selling consumer-direct in the United States.

At the Phoenix Electric Bike Expo, however, he said Bulls is reconsidering that strategy for its conventional bikes.

"We are thinking of going into the traditional IBD channels, but we haven't made a decision yet," Endara said. "But I'm thinking that we will." **BRAIN**



A rider puts the Bulls e-fat bike through the paces at the Electric Bike Expo.