

# SMART DRIVERS SHIFTING TO Smarter Cars

Interview w/ Tracy Woodard, Director of Government Affairs, Nissan USA

Nissan's powerful hold on the automotive market coupled with a century of experience in electric-powered cars allowed the company to quickly develop and model the LEAF.

According to Tracy Woodard, Director of Government Affairs, Nissan USA, "For the first time, utilities and automotive manufacturers are actually hearing customers. I think there is a willingness to make sure the customers are getting the best possible experience both on the car side and the utility side."

LEAF drivers filling up on electricity every night can expect to pay just about \$350 compared to \$1,900 in gas for 12,000 miles driven per year. Gas would have to drop to under \$1.10 per gallon to match the cost comparison – therefore, in theory, driving a LEAF could save you some money every single mile down the road.

The LEAF seats five adults and compared to the Versa, Civic, or Prius has more interior space. Due to the absence of the combustion engine, the transaxle and the various moving parts – obsolete in an

electric car, the driver and passenger are provided with more legroom.

"Our goal was reaching the 100-mile range on the EPA LA4 test cycle [light duty vehicle testing for optimal city driving conditions.] Then we focused on size and weight, there was very little we had to compromise. It was more about what we had to optimize," Woodard said.

With an MSRP of \$32,780, the Nissan LEAF is priced to break out of the early adapter market and appeal to a wider audience. Customers can expect up to \$7,500 in federal tax incentives for a drive off price of \$25,280.

The new quiet ride offered by EV's undoubtedly will be popular with drivers and passengers alike, but possibly could present safety concerns for pedestrians. In June however, Nissan announced an external sound maker to alert pedestrians of the vehicle startup or as the car approaches