

Two New OnStar Apps Offer Future Solutions for EVs

by Irena Granaas

As all-electric battery-power-only vehicles (EVs) begin to gain acceptance, General Motors and OnStar have been developing a number of innovative and interactive digital applications to make owners feel at ease with these cars.

Toward that goal, said Stefan Cross of OnStar Communications, at the GM Electrification Experience held recently in San Francisco, OnStar showcased two new apps to address the "range anxiety" that potential EV customers may be feeling since today's typical EV has a range of only about 40 miles between charges.

One potential answer featured at the event is the Spark EV Waypoint tab, which is being developed specifically for the Chevrolet Spark EV mini-car, a 2014 model year vehicle slated for release next year.

"Drivers are going to need to know if they can make a specific destination on a single charge, because they don't want to start driving and realize, 'Uh-oh, my battery's going to die and I'm out of luck,'" said Cross.

The Waypoint tab allows the driver to use a smartphone through the OnStar RemoteLink Mobile App, which is already available. Drivers send their planned destination to their vehicle and the app sends directions straight to their car to tell them:

- If they can make it on a single charge or if it is beyond the vehicle's range, and
- If their destination is too far, it will either tell the driver there are no charging stations along the route and will not recommend to try to make the trip, or

the Waypoint will find the optimal charging stations along the route and plot out a route for all the different stops.

Another app featured at the Electrification Experience under development is the Park-Tap-Charge. This is a prototype app being developed with General Electric, which may or may not eventually come to the market, but it's being shown as a possibility down the line to make the process of paying to use public charging stations quick and simple.

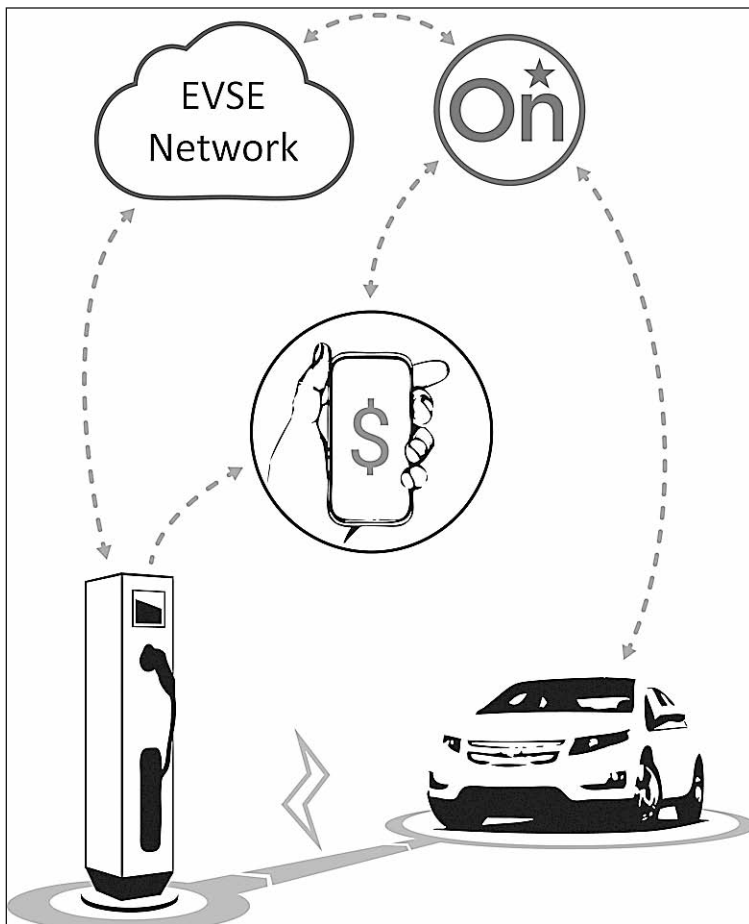
"As more electric vehicles come to the market and become more widely adopted, there's going to be a lot more public charging stations, and certain businesses or residences may have to start charging for the electricity used to charge your vehicle . . . and people may have to start paying for public charging," Cross said.

"So to do that, GE used what we call a watt station, a fancy charging station, and what it does is, when you plug in your vehicle, all a driver would have to do with this new app is tap their smart phone to the charging station and on the phone it will bring up payment options. If you accept the payment, it will initiate the flow of electricity and the vehicle will start charging."

For a quick cost comparison, Cross said that to bring a vehicle like the Chevrolet Volt from a zero percent charge to 100 percent charge, it costs on average \$1.50 for a complete fill-up to enable the vehicle to travel about 40 miles or so.

"On average, it's pretty inexpensive to fill up that much on electricity," he commented.

One convenient app already available to GM EV owners is the



Working jointly with Electric Vehicle Supplier Equipment (EVSE) networks, OnStar is showing the ability to simply start and pay for public vehicle charging using Near Field Communications (NFC) technology.

OnStar RemoteLink Mobile App.

"That's for 2010-and-newer GM vehicles with OnStar," Cross said. "So if you have a smartphone, a Blackberry, an Android or an iPhone, you can download the OnStar RemoteLink app, and that essentially allows you to manage, control and check certain vehicle functions from your cell phone, so what it does is it takes a number of OnStar services and actually puts it down into your smart phone."

Some of the things vehicle owners can do from their RemoteLink app is check vehicle diagnostics, like oil life, tire pressure, miles per gallon, and all ve-

hicle stats since the last time it was charged, which is updated in real time.

"The app also has some remote functionality, allowing the owner to link up to their car through the OnStar satellite system.

"So you can lock your car, unlock your car, start the vehicle and activate the horn and lights from any distance," Cross explained. "With a normal key fob you need to be within 200 yards or 500 yards of the car, or actually see it. With this RemoteLink app, you could be in China and you could unlock your car back here in Detroit."

Faurecia Earns GM Quality Award

Faurecia, the world's sixth-largest automotive supplier, was presented the General Motors Supplier Quality Excellence Award for 2012 on Nov. 15 for its automotive seating plant in Cleveland, Miss. This is a new award program for GM, and the Faurecia Automotive Seating facility is among one of its first to be so honored.

The Supplier Quality Excellence Award recognizes supplier achievements during the period of July 1, 2011, through June 30, 2012.

The Cleveland facility produces rear seat frames for a number of GM platform across its brands, including such popular vehicles as the Buick LaCrosse, Cadillac XTS and the Chevrolet Malibu, as well as other vehicles produced by GM.

"We are very proud of our associates in Cleveland and of all that they have achieved for our customer, General Motors," said Faurecia North America President Mike Heneka.

"Through our Faurecia Excellence System and the commitment of the entire Faurecia organization, we are devoted to ensuring top-quality production of innovative components and systems.

"All of us at Faurecia are most grateful for the recognition we have earned from General Motors and are honored to be among the first to receive the GM Supplier Quality Excellence Award."

In notifying Faurecia of its recognition, GM stated, "GM is striving to move from good to great as a company, and achieving that goal depends largely on the quality of our products ... Our continued progress is directly related to your progress and a shared commitment to quality."

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