

Grand unveiling for SA's first electric car in Switzerland

- Posted on: 08 March 2010
- Source: The Herald, 23 February 2010

Joule should go on sale in 2013.

South Africa's first electric car, the Joule, which is expected to be manufactured either in the Coega or the East London industrial development zones, will be featured at the Geneva Motor Show in Switzerland next month.

No decision has been made on where the vehicles will be manufactured, but a fleet of the electric cars -which have been hand-built in Port Elizabeth - will take to the roads in South Africa "within months".

A plug-in, zero-emission vehicle, the Joule at Geneva will give a very strong indication of the final design and layout of the car when it goes on sale early in 2013. Volume production will take place at a state-of-the-art facility in South Africa, with key design goals including a range of 300km based on the UDDS (Urban Dynamometer Driving Schedule) cycle, a genuine freeway cruising capability, seating for five, a five-star (European) NCAP (New Car Assessment Programme) safety rating and an on-sale price starting from R235 000."

Conceived by Cape Town-based Optimal Energy and designed by South African-born Keith Helfet, the Joule has been refined by Zagato's Total Design Centre and will form the centrepiece of a stand at Geneva shared by Optimal Energy and the iconic Milan, Italy design house.

"We're extremely excited about the Joule being displayed at Geneva," said Optimal Energy chief executive Kobus Meiring.

"With Optimal Energy, South Africa now also has its own OEM (original equipment manufacturer). The EV (electric vehicle) market is expected to grow exponentially over the next decades, and owning an EV brand will increase South Africa's role substantially.

"As a flexible company with no legacy investments in outdated technologies, we have the opportunity to position Joule uniquely in an awakening market."

Meiring said that "by harnessing both the latest technology and the best brains in the automotive and electrical spheres, the Joule will be exceptionally energy-efficient from cradle to grave".

Source: Eastern Cape Development Corporation

Web: <http://www.ecdc.co.za/>