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# Hawaii bus dealer Soderholm to sell electric vehicle buses in the Islands

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Hawaii-based Soderholm Bus & Mobility has partnered with a provider of specialty electric vehicles to distribute EV buses in the Islands in the near future.

Colorado-based Lightning eMotors is sending the first EV to Soderholm in May. Demonstration vehicles will be available in Hawaii in the summer for test drives, according to Soderholm, which has sold 3,200 buses in Hawaii and other Pacific islands over the last 30 years, a Soderholm spokesperson told Pacific Business News.

Soderholm's products include small-and mid-sized buses, full-sized motor coaches, school buses, vans, trams and trolleys. Soderholm, founded by Denise and [Erik Soderholm](#) in Hawaii in 1989, will also be configuring existing vehicles with Lightning's EV tech, it announced.

“Lightning eMotors’ new and re-powered products give us the flexibility we need to provide sustainable transportation systems to the Pacific Islands,” said [Erik Soderholm](#), co-owner and vice president of Soderholm Bus & Mobility, in a statement. “Hawaii is making big investments in sustainable energy, and zero-emission transportation is the next step the islands have to take to meet their targets.”



COURTESY SODERHOLM BUS & MOBILITY

An electric bus of Soderholm Bus & Mobility that will soon be offered in Hawaii.

Erik Soderholm told PBN that his company has sold over 550 Handi-Vans to the City and County of Honolulu since they started buying them in 1995, including 100 last year that were partly funded by the CARES Act. Those cost \$150,000 each; Soderholm said that at current, but falling, prices, it costs about \$100,000 more to "upfit" those vehicles with Lightning's EV tech.

Soderholm added the electric systems offers 85% in maintenance and fuel savings compared to a traditional gas vehicle, and the break-even point of savings for such a vehicle is about six years. He said he's proposed a re-manufacturing plan for Handi-Vans in which local techs would recycle seven-year-old buses that were being discarded.

Business was bustling for Soderholm prior to the coronavirus pandemic.

Lightning's EV offerings include medium-sized and heavy-duty vehicles including ambulances, delivery trucks, bucket trucks, food trucks, school buses and coach buses. It also installs private EV charging stations through its Lightning Energy division.

Hawaii is among 15 states and the District of Columbia to join a memorandum of understanding to expand the market for larger EVs, with a goal of 100% EVs by 2050 and an interim goal of 30% EVs by 2030.

"We're well-positioned with our zero-emission vehicles to be able to help states such as Hawaii reach their sustainability goals," stated Tim Reeser, CEO of Lightning eMotors. "Working with Soderholm will help fleets in the Pacific Islands to help fight climate change, and we're pleased to sign this agreement and ship the first unit to them in Honolulu next month."

**Brian McInnis**

Reporter

*Pacific Business News*

