

Electric car is time-beater at Pikes Peak climb event

July 2 2015, by Nancy Owano



For optimists enjoying the technology progress of electric cars, an encouraging turn of events took place recently with electric cars in the top two finishing spots at the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb (PPIHC) .

The annual Pikes Peak International Hill Climb is the second-oldest motorsport race event in the United States, and longstanding tradition in Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak [region](#), according to the PPIHC site.

The event is a considerable racing challenge; some call it the Race to the Clouds. The PPIHC is a 12.42-mile course with no less than 156 turns, which begins at 9,390 feet and finishes at the 14,115 foot summit of Pikes Peak.

"As the drivers climb toward the summit, the thin air slows reflexes and saps muscle strength. The thin air also robs engines of 30 percent of their power at the summit. Competitors and vehicles must be in top shape simply to finish...let alone win!," said the site. Jonathan M. Gitlin, *Ars Technica*, similarly commented that the event is "a unique challenge for man and machine. Starting at Mile 7 on Pikes Peak Highway, cars race one at a time up the side of Pikes Peak." Rhys Millen was the overall winner in his [electric](#) vehicle.

The car's time was 9:07.222. Commenting on his experience, Millen said, "Unfortunately, we lost power to the rear motor pack." He said losing power to the motors before halfway was disappointing "but hey we've still got a record. I guess I should still put a smile on my face.—but we were 30 seconds off our target."

He wished the time set could have been 30 seconds faster, adding that they lost a motor pack in the back. "First time doing the full run, you are going to learn some things."

The winning car was from Latvian engineering firm Drive eO, said *Green Car Reports*.

Millen thanked Drive eO from Latvia for giving him the opportunity to

drive "this incredible car" as well as others involved. The Latvian based engineering company specializes in the [design](#) and manufacture of electric and hybrid electric prototype vehicles. The company said it has an extensive track record in electric racing; it was the first to enter and complete the Dakar Rally with a hybrid electric vehicle.

Adam Westlake in *SlashGear* wrote about the car's details: the car "features three electric motors for each axle, powered by 50kWh lithium-ion [battery](#), resulting in a total of 1,368hp."

Westlake noted that overall EV cars testing at Pikes Peak do not suffer like traditional engines from declining oxygen when starting at 9,390 feet above sea level and racing on. Gitlin in *Ars Technica* also noted "electric motors don't have the same altitude [problem](#), making just as much power and torque in a vacuum as they do at sea level. Consequently, it's become a place for people to test out new EV technology."

Still, Millen's EV time is almost a minute off the outright course record, said Gitlin, set in 2013 by Sebastian Loeb and his Peugeot 208 T16 Pikes Peak.

Autoweek informed readers on June 30 about [weather](#) conditions at the event and said, "there are no official results yet," and to check the PPIHC results page later on "certified, 200-proof winners." PPIHC said to check its website "for final Official Results at a later [time](#)."

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