

Startup Volcon joins Austin area's electric vehicle scene, plans new HQ

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The Austin area's electric-powered vehicle sector continues to power up, as Volcon – a startup focused on off-road electric vehicles – is planning a new headquarters a manufacturing site in Central Texas.

Volcon, which debuted in October, makes two-wheel and four-wheel electric off-road vehicles such as motorcycles and utility terrain vehicles. Known as UTVs in industry shorthand, these vehicles differ from ATVS in that they typically have a standard four-wheel wheel base, can seat multiple passengers side-by-side and are used to haul equipment and supplies.

Volcon recently announced plans for a headquarters facility on a 53-acre property in Liberty Hill. The site, which is expected to open in the spring, will be a center of activity for the company and include manufacturing, a customer experience center, research and development and a testing facility, according to the company.

The company is led by CEO Andrew Leisner, a veteran of the off-road industry, and COO Bruce Riggs, former chief of operations at Round Rock-based electric vehicle maker Ayro. Volcon said it expects to grow its employee team to more than 100 when it begins manufacturing.

For now, Volcon is building its bikes at a temporary production facility in Round Rock.

The company currently has three products. The Grunt, a motorcycle that

will have a 100-mile range, is priced at about \$6,000. The vehicle is currently in testing and is expected to begin production between March and May. It also has two four-wheel vehicles: the Stag, a UTV priced at \$14,995 and scheduled to be released in late 2021; and the Beast, a full sport ATV priced at \$24,995.

"We believe that in the off-road sector, like all sectors, motorized vehicles are going to transform to electric power. The electric power plant and batteries and range apply themselves extremely well to off-road," Leisner said.

Leisner said the ways people already use off-road vehicles makes adding [electric vehicles](#) to the market an easy option. Off-road vehicles are typically used at low speeds of about 25-30 miles per hour for short trips, so battery life isn't as much of an issue as for more traditional on-road vehicles, he said.

"Range is not an issue. No one really drives any off-road UTV or motorcycle long, long distances across the states. Most people are enjoying them on their property or short shots, in our parks or in the forest," Leisner said.

At its headquarters site in Liberty Hill, the company plans to eventually add an off-road demo testing track, as well as an RV, zipline and camping site for clients.

"It'll be more than just a factory," Leisner said. "It will be a place where power sports enthusiasts can come and recreate and test our products directly."

Volcon is just the latest addition to the electric vehicle sector in Central Texas.

In July, Tesla CEO Elon Musk announced that the region would be home to the company's latest manufacturing site, a \$1.1 billion facility where the company will produce its Cybertruck, Semi, Model 3 compact sedan, and Model Y models. It also will likely produce batteries at the site.

Meanwhile, Austin-based electric vehicle maker Hyliion went public in October through a merger. The truck maker focuses on hybrid and fully electric power train suspensions for semi-tractors and trailers.

Leisner said local growth in the electric vehicle industry means Austin has a strong vehicle engineering talent pool, along with a community that's favorable to green businesses.

"We feel like Austin is becoming the electric vehicle hub of the country if not the world right now," Leisner said.

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