editor's
blog
entry

Almost three and a half years after getting so charged up by solar-charged driving that I founded SolarChargedDriving.Com and more than two and a half years after having a 5.59 kW solar system installed on our Aurora, Colo. rooftop, we *finally* had an EV plug in at our home today.

No, it wasn't ours – we've had to put off getting an EV due to unusual personal circumstances . But it was the next best thing: It was my brother's new Tesla Model S .

90-mile round trip

My brother and his family of four (this total includes him) zipped down from Boulder late this afternoon for a quick visit.

They didn't really need to plug in here. They left Boulder -- 45 miles from our house -- with 233 miles of range and arrived with 188 miles of range.

But even though they didn't need to plug in, I wanted them to.

And, so, with little fanfare – our neighbors saw me out front with my video camera and my Nikon SLR shooting multiple takes and photos but clearly had no idea they were looking at history in the making, much less at the most advanced production EV ever made – we plugged my brother's Tesla into our home solar system.

1 kWh draw

Actually, my brother's family didn't get here until about 4 p.m., too late for our solar system to actually be cranking out enough electricity to cover what appeared to be about a 1kWh draw on our electricity when the Model S was plugged in (we've got a TED system that shows us our electricity use and production in real time).

It would have been really cool to be able to say that we plugged directly into solar. But we plugged indirectly into solar: We've got 8,000+ solar-generated kWh we've banked with our utility, Xcel Energy, meaning our solar system has overproduced by more than 8,000 kWh since

our 5.59 system went online in late June 2010.

Since we don't have a 240-volt EV charger, my brother had to settle with plugging into a regular electric wall outlet.

He and his family only stayed for about two hours, and the Model S was only plugged in for about 1 ½ hours (I needed 30 minutes to shoot some quick video that I hope to edit for a future entry).

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4 miles of new range

During those 90 minutes, the Tesla added just 4 miles of range, inching from 188 miles to 192 miles.

But that was enough so that we can finally say our home solar PV system has finally pumped out some electrons which have flowed directly into an EV's battery (yes, our PV system was producing about 400 extra watts when we plugged in the Tesla at 4:30 p.m. Mountain Time).

Differently put, our home PV system is no longer an EV "virgin" ;-)

Solar-charge that, baby!

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