

Summerland Businesswoman Goes Electric to Help Environment

Daily commutes on electric power mean 95% savings on gas in first 6 months

Natalie Fischer is a Summerland business-owner whose commute to work is a mere one kilometre. This is typical for those living and working in a small community like Summerland. She bought an electric vehicle to suit her lifestyle of hauling goods and going places while doing her bit for the environment.

"Fossil fuel is definitely not the answer," she says. With two teenage children, Natalie worries about their future and the environment. And while the benefit to the environment drove her decision, she says it has also made financial sense.

Natalie bought a 2019 Hyundai Ioniq in September 2019 and the recommended retail price was \$32,995. This plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) goes up to 47 kilometres on electric when fully charged before it switches to gasoline. Natalie's short day-to-day commutes mean her costs for gas have all but gone away.



In the first six months of ownership, Natalie spent about \$15 on gas in total. Previously she would have been spending around \$315. Over time these savings add up, particularly when considering the inexpensive maintenance upkeep.

"I'm super happy with what I purchased for where I am in life right now," Natalie says. She is eyeing up a full electrical model in her future, when one with a higher kilometre range is in her budget and more public chargers are available (note: Summerland's charging network will have expanded to 25 public chargers by summer 2021). Natalie usually charges at home or at the office from a wall socket, the slowest method of charging. This suits her as the long charge time isn't inconvenient for her lifestyle.

Natalie generally doesn't take the car on long trips although she and her husband have used it for the seven-hour journey to Vancouver Island, and they didn't need to stop to refuel. Her Ioniq has great fuel efficiency with over 1,000 kilometres between a single tank of gas and its regular electric range. The vehicle's regenerative braking, such as on the return trip coming down the Coquihalla Highway into Peachland, charges the battery and gives an extra 18 kilometres range on electric.

For drivability, the Ioniq isn't known for its power but it does what it needs to and navigates hills like the one to Summerland from Penticton with no trouble. Natalie says it feels like being in a spaceship as it is so quiet and she often isn't sure if she has turned the car off. "It's weird, but cool," she says.

With the battery underneath the car there is plenty of storage room for shopping trips. Natalie is a definite convert to the electric vehicle way of life and her daughter also owns one. Natalie tells everyone that she highly recommends it.

"People ask me if it's my car," she says. "I tell them everything I possibly can and how happy I am with it."