

# Sales Of Electric Bicycles Surge

February 1, 2010

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Electric bikes are a new global growth industry — they are competing with regular bikes and cars now. In the U.S., the retailer [Best Buy](#) now sells electric bikes. Some are made with lighter materials and are designed to appeal to baby boomers, as *The New York Times* reported Monday. China, which has a widespread tradition of biking, has \$120 million electric bicycles on the roads — compared with 200,000 in the U.S.

## Transcript

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STEVE INSKEEP, host:

And today's Last Word in business is about the growing power of the bicycle market. Electric bikes are the new global growth industry, we're told, and they're competing with regular bikes, even competing with cars. Bikers around the world are snapping up these bikes that include electric motors.

Here in the United States, the retailer Best Buy now sells electric bikes, some of which are made with lighter materials and are designed to appeal to baby boomers, according to The New York Times. But Americans have a long way to go if they want to catch up with the world leader in electric bikes: China. The Times reports that around 200,000 electric bikes were sold in the United States last year, while an estimated 120 million electric bicycles are now on the road in China.

And that's the Business News on MORNING EDITION from NPR News. I'm Steve Inskeep.

RENEE MONTAGNE, host:

And I'm Renee Montagne.

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Recent First

 **Terry Sherry (Pedego)** wrote:



As a manufacturer of nearly 1000 electric bikes, I can attest that the buyers of these bikes are not using them for commuting or exercise. They are baby boomers who are buying them to have fun. Do they eventually use them for trips to the store, bank, etc.? Yes, because it is more fun to go to the store that way. Do they get exercise on them? Absolutely since people tend to pedal most of the time while riding. Are they being eco friendly? Better than driving a car to the market. These people remember how much fun it was riding a bike as a kid but today there is just a hill or headwind that they do not want to fight. So, because they are not willing or capable to struggle up some hill, they should not be allowed to ride at all? Electric bikes allow them to get back on a bike and be a kid again. Go for it!

February 1, 2010 4:03:19 PM CST

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**James Donohue (Hotbike)** wrote:

Rebecca:

Electric bikes do need to be plugged in to charge the battery. Some models have regenerative braking, which saves (reclaims) the energy wasted by using the brakes. It only takes about fourteen cents worth of electricity to recharge the battery, which is then good for fifteen to twenty miles.

I have two electric bikes (matching set, mens and ladies models)that I bought for a thousand dollars each. In addition, I have a prototype that I built as an engineering student, before the e-bikes were commercially available (c.1986). The electric bike is perfect for running errands, like buying fresh meat and veggies at the local supermarket, or going to the library. The motor makes it easy to ride up the biggest hills.

February 1, 2010 3:36:56 PM CST

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**Paul Weinstein (ProfPaul)** wrote:

Saw loads of electric motorcycles and bicycles during a 4-month stay in China last year. Got to be careful--you can't hear them as they zoom up behind you.

February 1, 2010 2:25:33 PM CST

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**Rebecca Hansbrough (spidergirl24)** wrote:

So how much do these electric bicycles run anyway? Do you have to plug them in to charge them up or it is done through peddle power?

February 1, 2010 10:23:17 AM CST

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