Mount Logan Middle School students to design electric cars

Kelly Cannon  Dec 13, 2014
Utah State professor John Devitry talks about the electric vehicle track being installed at the Innovation Campus on Wednesday afternoon at Mount Logan Middle School. Teachers from the middle school and Logan High, along with GEAR Up staff, are exploring the opportunities for getting students involved with building electric vehicles to race on the track.

John Zsiray/Herald Journal

Starting next year, students at Mount Logan Middle School and Logan High School in the GEAR Up program will begin designing and building electric cars that will eventually be raced on the electric car track that is currently under construction at Utah State University. Representatives from USU, GEAR Up and instructors from both schools met Wednesday to discuss the project and what it will entail.

“The university is one of our partners, and they keep trying to come up with things that will help accelerate kids and help them get ready for college faster. This one is a really great fast track for engineering kids or even art students who want to do design on the outside,” said Kris Monson, the GEAR Up coordinator. “What they’re hoping is that they start in middle school and they start thinking ahead and they get to high school and by the time they get to college, they have new ideas. They are way ahead of the game. They are thinking ahead and they’re thinking of things that no one has ever thought of.”
GEAR Up has already purchased the kits that the students will use to create their own electric cars. The cars should arrive at the beginning of January.

“The plan is to see if our computers can handle the technology of the CAD 3D. We’re going to check on the computers and see if they can handle the technology. If that doesn’t work, we’re going to hurry and either order some extra computers from Utah State that might be updated enough to handle it,” Monson said. “After we get done with that, the teachers will go back and actually start recruiting students.”

The students working on the electric cars will come from the GEAR Up program and have expressed interest in engineering. They will begin working on the cars immediately and will hopefully have them completed by the time the new track at USU is opened in April.

“There’s that $3 million track at USU just waiting for someone to come up with an idea on how to get us from one end of the valley to the other eventually without any emissions,” Monson said. “They’re putting their faith in these kids, in our schools, to come up with a solution eventually. And they’re starting them out young so that they’ll brainstorm and come up with a solution.”

Kelly Cannon
Kelly Cannon is the education reporter for The Herald Journal. She can be reached at kcannon@hjnews.com or 435-792-7239.