BREAKING RECORDS

RACING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Gentlemen, charge your batteries: four vehicles that won't need gas to top 300 mph

This fall, Ohio State University's Buckeye Bullet is gunning for an electric-vehicle land-speed world record on the salt flats of Bonneville, Utah, the site of the world's premier speed events. The Buckeye Bullet's attempt highlights the leaner, cleaner side of racing, featuring needle-shaped, battery-powered vehicles sprinting at 250-plus mph. Students aren't the only ones chasing green speed. Other teams include garage-savvy environmentalists, a former drag racer and a recovered quadraplegic who drives for charity, not just records. And several racers are backed by energy companies in search of better battery technology. But they all have one thing in common: a desire to top 300 mph. In August the Bullet became the first electric vehicle to surpass this feat in a timed mile, clocking in at 308.317 mph, beating the national electric land-speed record of 256.894 mph—unofficially, anyway. A record-breaking run is the average of two timed sprints, and a faulty rear differential prevented the team from racing again. "There's definitely the feeling of unfinished business," says Buckeye driver Roger Schroer. "We know the Bullet is capable; we just have to do it." While the Bullet may be on top for now, it does have challengers. Here's a closer look at four potential record-setters.—ADAM VOILAND

	THE CAR	THE TEAM	UNDER THE HOOD	BEHIND THE WHEEL	CHASING 300 MPH
	ABB e=Motion	Ex–drag racer Mark Newby teams up with deep-pocketed auto parts manufacturer.	Motor can produce more torque than a Porsche 911. Strictly enviro-friendly off-the-shelf parts.	Newby: "Imagine the noise an elevator makes, and couple that with a regal ride."	Bad weather halted a June attempt. The team will go for it again next May.
	BE3	Environmentalist Nelson Kruschandl gets a tech boost from Bluebird Electric.	Bluebird Electric's battery cartridge tech will allow the BE3 to recharge for a second run in only a minute.	Kruschandl: "The fastest I've been so far is 160 mph. I'll have to work up the speed of the BE3 gradually."	Quick-exchange batteries will be a boost. Now they just need to build the car.
	White Lightning	Former quadraplegic Pat Rummerfield and Edward Dempsey break records to raise money for charity.	Two 200-horsepower AC motors weigh only 75 pounds, so the car is powerful but light.	Rummerfield on the risks: "You're so focused, the danger of driving 200+ mph becomes secondary."	This current world record holder won't race next until another car takes its crown.
	Buckeye Bullet	Ohio State University student engineers, plus experienced racer Roger Schroer.	A custom-made motor pumps an impressive 90 percent of battery power to the wheels.	The thrill is unique, says Schroer: "You don't actually drive. You sort of guide."	Barring another equipment mishap, the Buckeye Bullet is a world-record lock.

PREDICTION

HEADLINE FROM THE FUTURE BY SHUKI BRUCK

2024 CONVENIENCE KILLS THE PAPER BALLOT

NOV. 5—More than 75 percent of eligible voters participated in the 2024 presidential election, up from a dismal 50 percent in previous years. Credit for the record-high turnout goes to a new electronic ballot that enables citizens to vote from home or any other location. The process is simple: Voters send an encrypted e-ballot via their Private Information Channel, a personalized and robust information highway, formerly known as the Internet, to an electronic ballot box. Cryptography and biometric devices, long perfected for e-commerce, resolve the security woes that bedeviled turn-of-the-century e-voting systems.

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ANNUAL WARMING IN THE ARCTIC IS TWO TO THREE TIMES THE GLOBAL RATE, ACCORDING TO NEWLY RELEASED RESULTS FROM THE ARCTIC CLIMATE IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY