E-Factory in the Windy City

While Europe seems to be waiting for a leading automaker or a national government to make the first major move and wake e-mobility from its slumber, North America is making several tiny moves to allow the zero emission auto industry to gain foothold. Recently Chicago has been added to the electric roadmap.

Just as Detroit is the centre of traditional car manufacturing, Chicago is gradually becoming a capital of alternative mobility. The city is not quite there yet but they have made some significant progress, and one small bird in the hand is certainly worth two in some distant bush. All of this makes it a milestone agreement that Smith Electric Vehicles is going to be building electric trucks in the city of Chicago.
The new manufacturing and assembly site is creating hundreds of direct and indirect jobs, and is supported by a local initiatives funded primarily by a federal program aiming to replace diesel-powered personal and goods transportation by sustainable and low emissions solutions. So far there are 404 alternative drive vehicles in Chicago, most of them running on CNG, while the electric charging infrastructure has been already expanded to over 200 locations. This network is the largest of its kind among major US cities, and its existence is justified by real-world figures: this year alone Chicago has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 2850 tonnes, while oil consumption has been reduced by 200,000 barrels.

Of course Smith Electric is not a fresh gun in the business. Its list of clients already include PepsiCo and Coca Cola, FedEx (which has recently announced the roll-out of a new fleet of a hundred vehicles), TNT and DHL,
The company offers two models, available in dozens of various configurations. The Smith Edison is sold globally (except the US) and is based on the Ford Transit. Base versions have a GVW of under 3.5 tonnes, making the vehicle suitable for driving with a regular driver's license, while multiple award winning Newton has a payload of 2.8-7.4 tonnes, making the vehicle ideal for heavy duty transport tasks. Range is 90-180 km, or 65-190 km, respectively.