

Sugar Creek E-Bike Maker Powers Bikes With Custom Battery Boxes

By [LAURA SPENCER](#) · 13 HOURS AGO

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Dave Abadie is a computer programmer by trade — and he has a passion for e-bikes.

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“Makers” is a series that shares stories of why people are compelled to create something with their own hands.

- **Name:** [E-Bike KC](#), Dave Abadie
- **Makes:** Custom battery boxes; converts regular bikes to e-bikes
- **Location:** Sugar Creek, Missouri
- **Background:** Freelance computer programmer
- **Number of years as a maker:** 5 years as a hobby, about 7 months as a business
- **Cost:** \$800 - 1200
- **Speed:** 20 - 25 mph
- **Distance:** 15 - 20 miles on a charge

On electric bikes rather than electric cars

"About five years ago, I got really interested in electric cars. And I saw somebody doing a project of converting an old car to electric power, and I thought that was really, really neat.

"So instead of just jumping in with both feet, I decided to do a bike project first. I did my first project, and it went really well. It worked better than I even expected it to. And I kind of forgot all about doing a car, and I just kind of focused on bikes. So I've been doing bikes ever since then."



Abadie builds custom battery boxes, like this one for his full-suspension mountain bike.
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On being a maker

"I've made a custom battery box — and this one's made out of aluminum and with plastic sides to kind of fit into the triangle of the bike there ... The motor is about 12 [pounds], the battery is about 8.

"I, personally, like to make more of a custom-type enclosure; I think it looks a little more original, it blends in a little bit better, and if it's constructed properly it will be a lot more durable than something that was just bolted on later. In that sense, that's kind of what I make."

On the appeal of an electric bicycle

"A lot of people don't really seem to understand why you would want to put an electric motor on a bike, past just not wanting to pedal as much. And that certainly is a big part of it.



Abadie shows off a work-in-progress that he hopes to have finished in time for Maker Faire.

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"But what I usually like to tell people is that most people are not cyclists. And the difference between riding your bike and being a cyclist is quite a bit, especially on some of the hills that we have in the Kansas City area. So try to think of it more as an assist.

"It's a true hybrid vehicle in the sense that you really get two ways of power: You can use your legs, or you can use your electric motor, or you can use both."

[Maker Faire Kansas City](#), Saturday and Sunday, June 24 - 25, Union Station
Kansas City, 30 W. Pershing Road, Kansas City, Missouri 64108.

Laura Spencer is an arts reporter at KCUR 89.3. You can reach her on
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