

Tempe Company is Challenging Mobility Obstacles and Changing Lives

Written by Kyley Warren

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While hiking and braving the rocky backroads of Arizona's trails may be a popular pastime for many Valley residents, others have found themselves unable to enjoy the activity, along with many of the other outdoor adventures that Arizona offers. But thanks to a Tempe company, which makes electronic vehicles that can accommodate the disabled on any terrain, many people are getting to enjoy the simpler things in life for the first time.

TerrainHopper USA is an electrically powered four-wheel drive, off-road mobility vehicle. The TerrainHopper company was invented in the UK in 2010, and is now gaining a reputation in the United States for its design of sleek, vehicles with comfortable performance.

CEO Todd Lemay, who graduated from Arizona State University, has endured mobility challenges and struggles of his own due to his battle with brittle-bone disease. But because of the TerrainHopper, Lemay is now able to enjoy life outside of his wheelchair.

His business venture to bring the electrically-powered vehicle to residents based in the United States is another step Lemay has taken in the hopes of seeing a dream be fulfilled; one where everyone is able to live their life with no boundaries.

"This kind of all started back in '97 or so. I was dating a girl. And she grew up in the Midwest, and I found out that she had never seen the ocean. My experience with the ocean has always been: you park, you go as far as you can to the end of the parking lot or the end of the pier and then that's it," says Lemay. "So, I planned this great trip that I was gonna take her to San Diego. So, we get there, we get out of the car, we go to the end of the parking lot and I'm like, 'There it is. There's the ocean.' And it was all great until she said, 'Do you mind if I go down and walk along the beach?' And I couldn't do that in my wheelchair."

That was 20 years ago. Fast forward to 2015, where while researching different vehicle options that could provide more mobility outside of his wheelchair, Lemay discovered the TerrainHopper.

From there, Lemay contacted the UK-based company and worked for over a year to convince them to ship one of the models out to the US for him. The moment that he received his TerrainHopper, Lemay was finally able to experience life—in the way that everyone deserves to.

"I was able to go on the beach with my wife and go hiking with my nieces and nephews, and just do all of this cool stuff that I'd never been able to do before," Lemay recalls.

His appreciation for the TerrainHopper quickly grew from admiration to a full-fledged passion. And after feeling an itch for something new, Lemay eventually sold his IT company and committed to doing whatever he could to bring the TerrainHopper to the US.

While other companies may be trying to market similar mobility devices, there is simply nothing like the TerrainHopper. The off-terrain vehicle can operate on surfaces and landscapes where wheelchairs can't. And because the TerrainHopper has been licensed as an Other Powered Driven Mobility Device (OPDMD), this means that the device is able to go anywhere in the country that a pedestrian is allowed to walk. So, whether it's hiking a trail nestled in the woods of Northern Arizona or visiting one of the state's stunning National Parks, the TerrainHopper can take you there.

Michael Garnreiter, Lemay's business partner, noted that their vehicle isn't just effective, it's also practical and comfortable—a luxury that isn't always afforded with many of the other models that are currently available on the market.

"There are maybe a dozen competing vehicles that have one or more limitations—including that many of them look like wheelchairs with big tires—but they don't look as stable for somebody that maybe doesn't have the upper body strength or the ability to manage their own body over some rougher terrain," says Garnreiter. "We have many different harnessing capabilities, depending on one's disability. And some of our competitors look, quite frankly, frightening going down or even up a slight grade. So, there's nothing that does what ours does in the same way."

Although the TerrainHopper boasts dozens of success stories, Lemay hopes that people understand that the vehicle goes beyond just assisting those with physical disabilities.

"The TerrainHopper is not just meant for people in wheelchairs. It's meant for older people who maybe just don't have the stamina and they'd love to go on a hike in North Scottsdale or enjoy South Mountain Park," says Lemay. "We're getting them in a TerrainHopper, getting them out doing things with their grandkids and getting them out in-style because it doesn't look like a wheelchair."

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The TerrainHopper currently comes in two different models: the Overlander 42S Mini, which starts at \$17,000, and the Overlander 42Zs, which starts \$18,000. The vehicle can accommodate children and adults, and they are even sold in a variety of colors.

For more information, visit the TerrainHopper USA official [website](#).