

Tesla Motors to open seven sales, service centers this summer

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As General Motors and Chrysler close dealerships across the country, San Carlos-based Tesla Motors has announced plans to open some.

Thursday, the electric carmaker said it will open seven regional sales and service centers in upcoming weeks, establishing a coast-to-coast network in North America and retail presence in Europe.

Stores in New York, Seattle and Chicago will open in late June, followed by Miami. The new additions will complement Tesla's flagship stores in Menlo Park and Los Angeles, which opened a year ago. The company's first European store will open in London later this month, followed by Munich and Monaco.

Prospective customers can test-drive the cars at all the locations.

"We are rethinking almost every aspect of the automobile — from the powertrain to the customer experience, both online and in our stores," Tesla CEO and product architect Elon Musk said in a news release.

Tesla said its \$109,000 Roadster beats nearly every other car for acceleration yet is twice as energy-efficient as a Toyota Prius. With an EPA-estimated range of 244 miles per charge, Tesla said it costs roughly \$4 to refuel and can be completely recharged in as little as 3.5 hours.

This past weekend, Tesla delivered its 500th Roadster in the United States. In late June, Tesla will begin producing the Roadster Sport, a higher-performance electric car that goes from 0 to 60 mph in 3.7 seconds. European Roadster deliveries begin this summer.

Tesla expects to begin producing an electric, zero-emission, \$50,000 Model S sedan in late 2011.

The news follow last month's announcement by Daimler that it will acquire 10 percent of the company in a deal valued from \$110 million to \$990 million.

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