

FUEL CELLS

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BC commits more funding to 20-bus fleet

British Columbia is a step closer to deploying the world's first fleet of fully commercial hydrogen buses, with the announcement of C\$45 million (US\$41m) towards the production of 20 buses and the development of hydrogen fueling stations in Whistler and Victoria. BC Premier Gordon Campbell announced the funding at the recent Hydrogen and Fuel Cells 2007 conference in Vancouver.

The ultimate goal is to demonstrate for the first time the integration of hydrogen fuel cell buses into the regular operational service of an urban transit system, allowing monitoring of operations, maintenance and fueling over a sustained period.

'Our goal is to see the world's first fleet of fuel cell buses on BC roads by the end of 2009,' says Campbell. 'This funding will ensure that the hydrogen highway that will run from Whistler to Vancouver, Surrey and Victoria will become a reality. We will continue our work with our partners in the US to extend the Hydrogen Highway from Whistler to San Diego by 2010.'

The Province had previously committed to this federal-provincial partnership, which is investing

C\$89m for fueling stations and the fleet of 20 fuel cell buses. In November, the Province dedicated an initial C\$10m of that funding to the first phase of the project, with a Request for Proposals that called for the development of a pre-production hydrogen fuel cell bus. BC Transit is now in contract negotiations with the top proponent for this initial bus and the subsequent production phase. This second C\$45m allocation will go towards production of the 20 buses, and to develop hydrogen fueling stations in Whistler and Victoria. BC Transit has issued a Request for Proposals calling for the development of the stations. The remaining C\$34m of the overall funding will be used by BC Transit to operate the fleet for up to five years.

Campbell also announced C\$155 000 to support a new undergraduate fuel cell systems design lab at the Institute for Integrated Energy Systems at the University of Victoria. The new facility, the first of its kind in the province, will help prepare future graduate engineers for employment with BC hydrogen and fuel cell companies.

For more on the BC Hydrogen Highway, go to:
www.hydrogenhighway.ca

Plug Power adds General Hydrogen to Cellex buy

US-based Plug Power has acquired General Hydrogen in Canada, a leading developer of fuel cell motive power for electric lift trucks. GH is located close to Cellex Power Products, which is focused on a similar market, and which Plug Power acquired last month. The two firms will be integrated into one operation managed by Cellex's current president, Chris Reid.

Plug Power paid US\$10m, consisting of \$7m in cash and the assumption of \$3m in senior secured loans previously made by Plug to GH.

'By acquiring both General Hydrogen and Cellex Power, clear leaders in their industry, we expect to realize significant technology and operational synergies as we pursue high-value

applications in the material handling market,' says Dr Roger Saillant, president/CEO of Plug Power. 'Further, we anticipate that higher volume commercial product manufacturing activities will be established in Plug Power's Latham, NY facility.'

General Hydrogen's initial product focus is on the larger class 1 sit-down lift trucks, while Cellex has focused on class 3 rider pallet trucks. Both are developing fuel cell power units for class 2 stand-up reach trucks. Being able to offer all three classes will enable Plug Power to create a compelling value proposition for customers to convert their entire fleets to PEM fuel cell technology.

Meanwhile, Plug Power has entered into a two-year agreement with Ballard to buy stacks for its commercial needs in electric lift truck applications, replacing the previous GH-Ballard agreement.

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