



NHA Conducts Topical Forum on DOD Uses of Hydrogen

Debbi Smith, National Hydrogen Association

Columbia, South Carolina was the site of the NHA's second Topical Forum entitled, *Hydrogen Uses in the Military*. The Forum focused on the role of the U.S. Department of Defense as an early adopter of hydrogen technologies and fuel cell technologies with a specific emphasis on manufacturing readiness. Sessions were developed around specific applications:

- Battery Enhancement with Fuel Cells
- Specialty Vehicles and APUs
- Stationary Power and UPS
- Production, Storage and Delivery

An outstanding Keynote Panel with representatives from the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Navy and the U.S. Department of Energy spoke on the demonstration, testing and overall view of hydrogen and fuel cells for DOD uses. Dr. Michael Quah of Concurrent Technologies, Moderator of the Keynote Panel, pointed out signs that technology is advancing. "I want you to be aware of some of the words you are hearing associated with hydrogen and fuel cells from these speakers," said Quah, "Procurement, Deployment and Scalable Manufacturing."

The second day was devoted to workshops in which each group was given a set of questions to discuss and answer. When conclusions were presented, audience members were informed that some hydrogen fuel cell technologies are ready now for DOD use and will enhance the performance and operability of some applications such as UAVs. Other potential applications, such as fork lifts, are being tested and analyzed now.

One of the recurring messages from the workshops was a widespread need throughout DOD for education about hydrogen and fuel cells before they can really be implemented. A valuable education tool would be the continuation and an expansion of the work begun in the strategic operations side of DOD, recounted three of the four workshops. Examples of strategic applications are electrical power for U.S. base operations and fuel for the non-tactical fleet which numbers approximately 160,000 vehicles. Another place to make some headway, advised an impromptu audience discussion, is to create a hydrogen and fuel cell presence at military conferences.

Many participants took the time to comment on how much they learned from the presentations, the Expo and the networking. Perhaps the comment most often heard was, "I didn't know South Carolina was getting so involved in hydrogen!" The extent to which the entire state is behind the implementation of hydrogen technologies and fuel cell technologies is impressive and was not lost on the Forum participants. From the Mayor of Columbia, the Commander of Fort Jackson Army Base, the President of USC, South Carolina's elected officials in Washington, DC, the President of the Columbia Chamber of Commerce, the Members of the Columbia Fuel Cell Challenge and many others from South Carolina, the message was clear and consistent, "Hydrogen and fuel cells are our future...beginning now."

Presentations and workshop conclusions can be found on the forum website: www.hydrogenforums.org/07Military.



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Erika Witherspoon,
National Hydrogen Association

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