

Fuel Cells UK welcomes the launch of the new UK Low Carbon Economic Area focusing on hydrogen energy

Friday, February 12th, 2010

Fuel Cells UK is delighted to welcome the creation of the new Low Carbon Economic Area (LCEA) focusing on hydrogen energy. The LCEA will cover South Wales and the South West of England initially, providing a hub for the UK's hydrogen activities and will build on the region's expertise in hydrogen production. A key aim will be to establish an internationally recognised centre of excellence and expertise in hydrogen technologies encompassing the full hydrogen energy value chain. The announcement was made today by Lord Hunt, Minister of State for Energy & Climate Change during a visit to Johnson Matthey Fuel Cells' global manufacturing facility in Lydiard Fields in Swindon.

LCEAs, which were introduced by the Government's Low Carbon Industrial Strategy, aim to facilitate Britain's transition to a low carbon future. This is achieved by bringing together national, regional and local bodies to join forces in accelerating growth of the low carbon industry in the UK. The new hydrogen energy LCEA will focus on South Wales with the strong support from the South West Regional Development Agency and £6.3m investment from the University of Glamorgan.

Dennis Hayter, Chair of Fuel Cells UK, says: 'The announcement of the new hydrogen energy Low Carbon Economic Area strengthens the Government's commitment to fuel cells and hydrogen, and brings us one step closer to the transition to a low carbon Britain. By supporting the development of a hydrogen infrastructure through such initiatives, the UK will be better prepared for the worldwide launch of many thousands of fuel cell vehicles planned for 2015. Fuel cells offer benefits of zero-emission driving with a threefold greater range than battery-electric vehicles and, when mass produced, are expected to cost less than plug-in hybrids and battery-only electric vehicles.'

Alongside the latest LCEA announcement Lord Hunt has also congratulated companies successful in the recent Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Demonstrator Programme – a joint funding programme by the Technology Strategy Board and DECC, outcomes of which were published earlier today.

Celia Greaves, of Fuel Cells UK, said 'Our industry has responded enthusiastically to the challenge of this programme. We are thrilled to see that 15 funded projects are now moving forward into the exciting phase of demonstration. These funding packages will complement the LCEA initiative and provide a further demonstration of the Government's commitment to fuel cells and their role in the low carbon economy.'

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NOTES TO THE EDITOR

1. Fuel cells have the potential to deliver carbon savings and efficiency benefits in a diverse range of applications: buildings (from homes through to business, hospitals, schools etc.), transport (passenger cars, fleet vehicles, busses and trains) and portable (mobile phones, laptops and others).
2. The Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Demonstrator Programme - the competition for up to £7.2m funding for fuel cell and hydrogen demonstration was announced in September 2009 as a part of the Government's activities to stimulate the low carbon economy in the UK. Further details on the outcomes announcement can be found at: <http://www.innovateuk.org/content/press-release/fuel-cell-and-hydrogen-technologies-to-be-stimulat.ashx>
3. Further details on the announcements can be found at: http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/news/pn10_018/pn10_018.aspx
4. **Fuel Cells UK** (www.fuelcellsuk.org) acts on behalf of its members to accelerate the development and commercialisation of fuel cells in the UK. We provide a respected and authoritative point of contact and a clear, informed and up-to-date view on research, development and demonstration priorities for Government, other funding agencies and opinion formers.

Our members include the leading fuel cell companies in the UK as well as a range of other stakeholders, from energy utilities to component developers, fuel suppliers and others involved both directly and indirectly in the industry.

We cover all fuel cell applications, the full fuel cell supply chain (from research into material science through to systems integration and distribution), all fuel cell types and issues around the delivery, storage and use of associated fuels.

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