



For Immediate Release
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Press Contact: Jennifer Gangi
(202) 785-4222

Materials Handling Giving Fuel Cell Industry Major Lift

(Washington, DC – April 23, 2009) Recent purchases and commitments from big-name corporations and the U.S. government for fuel cell-powered forklifts are providing a major lift to the industry. Fuel Cells 2000 estimates that there are approximately 500 systems currently in operation around the world, with at least 500 orders coming down the pike.

“We’ve seen large purchases of fuel cell forklifts from companies around the U.S., and substantial interest offshore” said Jennifer Gangi, Program Director of Fuel Cells 2000, a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC. “Customers are finding that fuel cells provide savings on several fronts – economic, environmental and workforce productivity. In other words, customers can save money by converting to fuel cells.”

A recent study by [Argonne National Laboratory](http://www.ornl.gov) estimates that fuel cell lift trucks produce 63% less greenhouse gas emissions than battery systems, but that’s not the only savings. Batteries are heavy and take up a lot of storage space while only providing up to 6 hours of run time. Fuel cells last more than twice as long (12-14 hours) and there is no more need for battery storage and changing rooms, leaving more warehouse space for products. The greatly reduced fueling times – one or two minutes *by the forklift operator* compared to 20-30 minutes or more for each refill also saves valuable time.

Central Grocers, a 200-store Chicago-area chain, recently purchased 220 fuel cell forklifts for its new warehouse in Joliet, IL, opening later in 2009. Central estimates it will save \$1.5 million over 10 years by going fuel cell. Other companies already using the technology include Wal-Mart, Ace Hardware, Bridgestone/Firestone, Federal Express and the Department of Defense’s Defense Logistics Agency, which happens to be the second largest warehouse operation in the United States.

The Department of Energy recently announced \$41.9 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding that will support the immediate deployment of fuel cell forklifts around the country. Companies that have already received funding for more than 200 forklifts include Anheuser-Busch, Sysco, GENCO, and East Penn Manufacturing.

There is also a federal tax credit to make the transition more attractive - \$3,000 per kilowatt tax credit for purchase of the fuel cell, and a 30% credit for the cost of installing hydrogen infrastructure, up to \$200,000.

For more information, go to www.fuelcells.org.



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