



Press Release

World Hydrogen Energy Conference from May 16 – 21 in Essen

Minister Thoben: “Fuel cell and hydrogen technology is a key engineering focus with major economic potential / Fuel cell technology can become an export hit “made in North Rhine-Westphalia”

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Remarks by the Minister of Economic Affairs and Energy of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia:

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Essen. “Fuel cell and hydrogen technology is a key engineering focus with major economic potential. We recognize that the numerous applications for fuel cells offer the potential to make this technology an export hit “made in North Rhine-Westphalia”. And that is why it has become a focal point of funding and development activities of the state government in the field of energy. North Rhine-Westphalia already holds a leading position in hydrogen and fuel cell technology”, noted Minister of Economic Affairs Christa Thoben today (May 17) at the opening of the 18th World Hydrogen Energy Conference (WHEC 2010) in Essen.

Some 1500 participants from Germany and abroad are expected to attend the conference of top scientists from all over the world, which will be accompanied by a three-day trade fair and a programme of supporting events. The goal of the biennial conference is to lay the cornerstone for the impending introduction of hydrogen as an energy carrier to the world market. It will also showcase German activities in the field of fuel cell and hydrogen technology under the umbrella of the Federal Government’s National Innovation Programme for Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technology (NIP). The event is also part of the programme of the European Capital of Culture RUHR.2010. The State of North Rhine-Westphalia and the Forschungszentrum Jülich support the WHEC 2010. The conference organizer is the EnergieAgentur.NRW.

The State Government promotes numerous research, development and demonstration projects in industry and science. Thus far, some 90 projects have received 165 million EUR in funding support from the state and another 100 million EUR from the European Union. The goal of the lead project “NRW Hydrogen HyWay” is to intensify key activities devoted to the development of a fully functional, cost-effective hydrogen supply infrastructure in the state. The “HyWay” extends from the Aachen area through Cologne along the hydrogen pipeline into the Rhine-Ruhr region and on to the Münsterland. It unites roughly 40 planned and currently on-

going projects in the field of fuel cell and hydrogen technology. The Ministry of Economic Affairs of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and the EU have appropriated an additional 60 million Euro in support of these activities.

Another important aspect is the availability of large quantities of industrial hydrogen in the state. "This hydrogen offers a good starting option. Some 260,000 passenger vehicles or nearly 6,000 buses could be fuelled with this hydrogen in NRW without having to produce a single additional molecule of hydrogen. With roughly 10 million cars on the road, this represents a small but very important first step", the Minister points out.

And the time is ripe for further steps. Thus the EnergieAgentur.NRW will join the Federal Government's "Clean Energy Partnership" (CEP) within the framework of the NIP as the representative of North Rhine-Westphalia. The partnership is devoted primarily to the development and realization of plans for interstate projects in local public transportation, which will also be supported with federal funds. Minister Thoben: "From single components to entire systems, from passenger cars to public transportation vehicles, this technology will be developed, produced and implemented world-wide in Energy Region No. 1."

Striking accents on the first day of the WHEC

Hydrogen is an indispensable energy carrier for a mobile future. "It fits perfectly into the current discussion on electromobility and renewable energy sources", notes Prof. Dr.-Ing. Detlef Stolten from the Forschungsinstitut Jülich, Chairman of the 18th World Hydrogen Energy Conference WHEC 2010. "So-called green hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources should contribute significantly to reducing climate-damaging emissions in future. Environmentally friendly mobility can be realized at a reasonable cost with the hydrogen powered fuel cell – at least according to the promising plans of the automotive industry for 2015 and beyond."

Information for an interested public

"The WHEC 2010 will also offer an interested public insights into the future of energy with hydrogen applications", explains Prof. Stolten. The extensive conference, to be conducted in English, will be accompanied by a three-day international trade fair (May 17 - 19 in Hall 3 at the Messe Essen) featuring the most recent developments in the hydrogen industry as well as field trips to fuel cell development and production facilities in North Rhine-Westphalia. Visitors to the Messe Essen will also be offered an opportunity to test drive fuel-cell vehicles. As the European Capital of Culture RUHR.2010, the host city of Essen will also offer a broad programme of supporting events.

Internet: www.energieregion.nrw.de und www.whec2010.com