

PRESS RELEASE

Place and Date: Düsseldorf, 26.02.2010

Contact: Uwe H. Burghardt

Tel. (02 11) 86642-13

Burghardt@energieagentur.nrw.de

Interview with Dr. Frank-Michael Baumann, Managing Director of the EnergyAgency.NRW

“The world of hydrogen and fuel cells is closer to becoming a reality than some people may think.”

18th World Hydrogen Energy Conference WHEC2010 in the Energy Capital of Essen

The 18th World Hydrogen Energy Conference WHEC2010 to open on 16 May will place this year's Cultural Capital of Essen / Ruhr 2010 in the focus of attention within the international hydrogen and fuel-cell industry for six days (until 21 May). The conference has been held semi-annually at various locations around the world under the auspices of the International Association for Hydrogen Energy (IAHE) since 1976. The Newsletter editors spoke with Dr. Frank-Michael Baumann, Managing Director of this year's WHEC organizer EnergieAgentur.NRW, about expectations for WHEC2010 as well as the goals and programme of the conference.

Following the conferences in Lyon (2006) and Brisbane (2008), WHEC2010, the 18th annual World Hydrogen Energy Conference, will be held in the Energy Capital of Essen, placing Germany – and North Rhine-Westphalia in particular – in the limelight of the global hydrogen and fuel-cell industry for nearly a week. Some 1,500 participants and roughly 100 corporate and institutional exhibitors from Germany and abroad are expected.

Newsletter: Dr. Baumann, what makes this World Hydrogen Energy Conference so important for the industry? Or to put it differently – why is it a “must” event for exhibitors and participants alike?

Dr. Frank-Michael Baumann: The World Hydrogen Energy Conferences have ranked among the most important events in the field of hydrogen-energy and fuel-cell technology for many years. This is the 18th WHEC, after all. The goal of the WHEC2010 is to position hydrogen energy clearly as a key contributor to the development of a sustainable, climate-friendly energy economy.

Our aim is to demonstrate the potential role of hydrogen energy in combination with efficient fuel-cell technology in a sustainable, climate-friendly energy economy. Among other things, it

is particularly important for the WHEC2010 to bring the advantages of hydrogen to the attention of decision-makers and to heighten awareness of this technology.

The strong interest in the WHEC2010 expressed thus far clearly shows that the event will serve as a major platform for international dialogue and a forum of unrivalled scope and significance for the industry. And the WHEC2010 is also unique by virtue of its combination of a scientific conference, a parallel exhibition and an auxiliary programme.

Newsletter: As you have already suggested, the WHEC2010 will be much more than an “ordinary” industry conference....

Dr. Frank-Michael Baumann: Yes, the WHEC 2010 will go far beyond the scope of the usual industry conferences, as is already indicated by the anticipated number of participants. And as I mentioned, the combination of a conference, a trade fair and a fascinating auxiliary programme is designed to appeal not only to conference participants but to interested private citizens as well. The conference will not take place in an isolated, behind-the-scenes setting but will be highlighted in order to attract the attention of a broad public. For this and other reasons, a number of different hydrogen-powered vehicles will be travelling the streets of Essen during the WHEC. We have also initiated a poster project in cooperation with students from the Folkwang-School in Essen. The winning poster will be shown at various spots in Essen in advance of the conference.

Newsletter: Specifically, what sort of path-breaking insights can participants expect to gain at the conference and the trade fair?

Dr. Frank-Michael Baumann: The programme as it now stands comprises some 330 lectures and presentations and over 200 posters. Lectures and presentations have been submitted by experts in the fields of research, science and industry from all over the world.

The lecture and presentation programme and the poster action relate to ten major subject areas featured in some 50 sessions:

- Basic principles of fuel-cell technology
- Fuel infrastructure
- Hydrogen production technology
- Storage technology
- Political perspectives, initiatives and organizations
- Strategic analyses
- Safety issues
- Existing and developing markets
- Stationary applications
- Mobile applications

The trade fair comprising exhibits presented by some 100 corporate enterprises and institutions from ten different countries will also feature a German pavilion as well as joint national exhibits from other countries, at which visitors will be able to observe the most recent developments in the fields of industry and research. We also plan to organize one of the most significant exhibits of fuel-cell vehicles ever presented and are currently engaged in discussions with a number of automobile manufacturers for that purpose.

Newsletter: Hydrogen is no longer an “unknown quantity” in Germany and especially in NRW, where it is present state-wide in diverse applications, vehicle trials and pipelines. Yet the question remains: What long-term impulses do you expect from the WHEC2010 for Germany and Europe?

Dr. Frank-Michael Baumann: It is time to overcome the prevailing view that hydrogen technology will not play a significant role in the foreseeable future. This technology has already reached an advanced stage of development of growing importance to the future transportation and energy infrastructure. Fuel cells can be used in both stationary and mobile applications, which means that the technology can contribute significantly to the reduction of pollutant and CO₂ emissions in both the transportation and building energy supply sectors. Many applications are market-ready even now. Germany is undoubtedly one of the global technology leaders. And we want to take advantage of this opportunity to demonstrate our strength to visitors to the 18th WHEC in 2010 as well.

NRW is uniquely fortunate in that the state has more than 240 kilometres of hydrogen pipeline already. This can serve as the starting point for development of a comprehensive infrastructure. NRW has a huge potential of surplus industrial hydrogen – enough to provide a dependable supply of fuel for 260,000 passenger vehicles. Thus the crucial question is not where hydrogen will come from, but rather how it can be brought to the user.

The world of hydrogen and fuel cells is much closer to becoming a reality than some people may think. Our objective is to make this clear to decision-makers in the business and scientific communities and in the media as well.

I am confident that the WHEC2010 will provide new impetus for the development of a hydrogen-energy economy.

Newsletter: The WHEC2010 will not only provide a forum for experts but will also attract teachers, school and university students and other interested visitors. What specific activities have been planned?

Dr. Frank-Michael Baumann: One of our most important objectives is to offer people outside the scientific community insights into the future hydrogen-based energy economy. We want to show just how far fuel-cell technology has advanced and demonstrate that it is practically market-ready and not merely a plaything for scientists in laboratories.

With this in mind, we have come up with a number of interesting ideas:

For one thing, we plan to offer information on the subject of hydrogen and fuel-cell technology at an open-house on Sunday, 16 May 2010. Visitors will also be given an opportunity to experience fuel-cell technology “live” on this occasion. The programme will include ride-and-drive events with various different vehicles. Visitors to Lake Baldeney will have a chance to take a boat tour on the “Alsterwasser” (courtesy of the city of Hamburg) and admire the “Ruhr Atoll”, while enjoying the experience of noiseless, emission-free engine technology in a breathtaking setting. Experts will explain the technology to guests in detail at the lakeshore pavilion.

A special programme for school students and teachers will be offered on Monday, 19 May 2010. We want to acquaint young people with the fascinating world of hydrogen and fuel-cells, and to encourage school students to take an interest in this technology in preparation for later studies in a related field of science. Students will embark on a journey of discovery through the world of hydrogen technology, performing experiments and engaging in discussion with experts from the scientific and business communities. These activities will be complemented by an award ceremony and a team presentation as part of an international competition for school students. The winning teams from “Jugend Forscht” (Young Scientists) will also be invited to present the fruits of their research on Students’ Day.

We also plan to conduct workshops on the subject of fuel-cell technology in the classroom for teachers, students and trainees. The programme will be rounded out with an education, training and job fair.

A programme designed for university students is planned for Tuesday, 18 May 2010 as a means of acquainting them with the future of hydrogen technology. Selected session chairs will brief participants on recent advances in technology and research and make themselves available for discussion. A thesis and dissertation fair will complement the programme. Teachers and students will also be invited to visit the conference exhibition.

Another important scheduled event is the award ceremony for the “Fuel Cell Box NRW” competition for school students, which will take also place on the “Alsterwasser” on the Friday preceding the opening of the WHEC.

Special programmes for interested lay people are also being developed in cooperation with the Volkshochschule Essen (Essen Adult Education Institute) and the regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Finally, conference participants will be offered the opportunity to take part in field trips to hydrogen-energy and fuel-cell facilities in NRW and possibly to out-of-state locations on the last day of the conference.

All in all, I think we have set up quite an extensive programme that goes far beyond the scope of a normal conference.

Newsletter: Dr. Baumann, we wish to thank you for your highly informative remarks.

Information on the conference

18th World Hydrogen Energy Conference 2010 (WHEC 2010)

Dates: May 16 – 21, 2010

Venue: Essen, Germany

Internet: www.whec2010.com

Editorial queries:

EnergieAgentur.NRW

Press Spokesman for Innovations and Networks

Uwe H. Burghardt M. A.

Haroldstraße 4

40213 Düsseldorf

Telephone: +49 (0)2 11 8 66 42 – 13; **Mobil:** +49 (0)1 60 746 18 55

e-mail: Burghardt@energieagentur.nrw.de

Internet: www.energieagentur.nrw.de