



DDWG celebrates new hydrogen fuel cell powered operations

By Jessica Roman, DDC Public Affairs

Recently, Defense Distribution Depot Warner Robins, Ga. celebrated the official opening of its hydrogen fuel cell technology program. DDWG is the second in a series of four pilot projects to create early market opportunities for cutting-edge hydrogen and fuel cell technologies.

The Department of Energy, Defense Logistics Agency Research and Development, and the Defense Distribution Center have partnered to deploy this new technology. “We are investing to promote the development of fuel cell technologies for military and commercial applications to demonstrate the business case for fuel cell applications within the Department of Defense operations, and to move towards fully renewable energy solutions that reduce fossil fuel dependence,” said Leo Plonsky, DLA R&D program manager for hydrogen and fuel cell technologies.

Hydrogen is the fuel of choice for most fuel cell applications. It is poised to be the cleanest supply of energy, as it can be generated from a range of renewable sources and emits predominantly water vapor when converted to energy.

Fuel cells function like a battery; with external fuel (hydrogen) being supplied rather than the use of stored electricity. “Not only does this technology reduce DLA’s dependence on imported oil, it reduces greenhouse gas emissions



A ribbon cutting ceremony opened the DDWG hydrogen fuel cell program. Pictured are (left to right): Leo Plonsky, program manager, DLA Hydrogen and Fuel Cells Research and Development Program; Donna Davis, chief, DLA Research and Development; Beth Moore, chief, DDWG Support Services Group; Debra McBeath, DDWG deputy director; Robert King, DDWG director; United States Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Peter Talleri, DDC commander, Richard Farmer, acting program manager, Fuel Cell Technologies Program, Department of Energy; Otis Hicks, director, 78th Civil Engineering Group, Robins Air Force Base; United States Air Force Maj. Gen. Polly Peyer, commander, Warner Robins Air Logistics Center; Kyle Werner, division manager, Power and Circuit Board Technology, NSWC Crane; Ken Burt, team leader, Alternative Energy, NSWC Crane; and Ed Sheehan, president and CEO, CTC.

that can contribute to climate change,” said Plonsky.

The DDWG pilot includes 20 fuel cell-powered forklifts, an outdoor hydrogen production, storage, and dispensing system, and mobile refuelers to distribute hydrogen to the forklifts at five different warehouse locations.

“Most people are aware of DLA’s more traditional combat support role and our Agency’s global efforts, but DLA’s new leadership role in the alternative fuels arena will prove invaluable in enhancing the

tools the Agency needs to support our customers now and in the future,” said United States Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Peter Talleri, DDC commander. “Programs like hydrogen and fuel cell technologies offer potential solutions to energy challenges related to battlefield logistics, energy security and environmental sustainability.”

In February 2009, DDC’s first hydrogen fuel cell project opened at DoD’s largest distribution center, Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa. To date, DDSP, in over 50,000 hours of

operation, has had over 12,000 fills and 10,000 kilograms of hydrogen dispensed. Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, Calif., will soon begin its pilot program with 20 forklifts and electrolysis for hydrogen. DDJC will also investigate the technical issues and business case for using solar energy instead of natural gas to produce hydrogen. The infrastructure will create hydrogen on site, using solar power to electrolyze water.

“DLA’s Research and Development program efforts are poised to make a tremendous difference in the future of the Agency and the Department of Defense,” said Talleri. “How we invest our limited resources today can literally help change the world.”



A Defense Distribution Depot Warner Robins, Ga., employee displays a new hydrogen powered forklift.

Members of DDC and DDWG’s hydrogen fuel cell team simulate the refilling of a hydrogen mobile refueler. Pictured are (left to right): United States Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Peter Talleri, DDC commander; Robert King, DDWG director; Debra McBeath, DDWG deputy director; and Beth Moore, DDWG chief, Support Services Group.