

Contact: Nick Cappa
Cole Quinnell

DaimlerChrysler Hits 100 Fuel Cell Vehicles Goal

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DaimlerChrysler announced today that the company has reached its goal of 100 fuel cell vehicles. The largest fleet of fuel cell vehicles in the world consists of Mercedes-Benz F-Cell passenger cars, medium-duty Dodge fuel cell Sprinter Vans and Mercedes-Benz Citaro fuel cell Buses. The vehicles are in customer hands or currently being prepped for use around the globe.

"This is only the beginning of our efforts," said Mark Chernoby, Vice President Advance Vehicle Engineering. "Over 100 fuel cell vehicles generating data in different environments gives DaimlerChrysler a unique advantage."

Over 100 DaimlerChrysler fuel cell vehicles:

- 60 Mercedes-Benz F-Cell passenger cars
- 3 Dodge medium-duty fuel cell Sprinter Vans
- 33 Mercedes-Benz Citaro fuel cell buses
- Over 10 research and development vehicles

In the State of the Union address last year, President Bush declared his revolutionary hydrogen fuel plan, which searches for a new day in which America's cars and light trucks are fueled by clean hydrogen-powered fuel cells. President Bush stated, "The first car driven by a child born today could be fueled by hydrogen and pollution free."

Partnerships are an important part of fuel cell technology development. DaimlerChrysler has the opportunity of sharing goals with other companies and government entities, such as UPS and the EPA. DaimlerChrysler and BP, partners in the Department of Energy's fuel cell vehicle and infrastructure validation program, recently dedicated the first hydrogen station in the plan. These partnerships and the common goal will propel fuel cell transportation to maturity.

The principle of the fuel cell was discovered in 1839 by the English physicist Sir William Grove. In the fuel cell, a chemical reaction takes place between hydrogen and oxygen, in which electrical energy and heat are released and chemically pure water is produced. The fuel cell has a sandwich-like structure; between two gas-permeable electrodes of graphite paper is an electrolytic plastic foil, the proton exchange membrane (PEM). Since a single cell produces only a very small electrical potential, several cells are connected in series to form a fuel cell stack. The electrical energy generated is used to power the vehicle's electric motor, as well as supplying the peripheral elements of the fuel cell system.

In order to focus expertise and resources, and to press ahead with the development of the fuel cell, DaimlerChrysler has entered into a strategic alliance with Ford Motor Company and the fuel cell specialist Ballard Power Systems. Over the past 10 years, DaimlerChrysler has developed numerous concept vehicles in order to prove out the opportunities presented by this technology.

DaimlerChrysler pioneered fuel cell vehicle technology over 10 years ago. Fuel cells release energy from the reaction of hydrogen with a catalyst and oxygen. This clean technology operates at a high level of efficiency and is true zero emission. Hydrogen-powered fuel cell vehicles emit only pure water vapor as exhaust. Fuel cell vehicles are part of DaimlerChrysler's advanced propulsion technology umbrella, which includes efficient gasoline engines, advanced diesels and hybrid powertrain systems.

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