

3M Exhibits Experimental Nano-Structured Catalyst For Hydrogen Fuel Cells at Expo on Capitol Hill

Also Reports on Several Advances at Department of Energy's Hydrogen Peer Review Program During 'Fuel Cell Week'

3M discussed its new nano-structured, thin-film catalyst for fuel cell membrane electrode assemblies (MEAs) and other new developments at the Fifth Annual Congressional Fuel Cell Expo on Capitol Hill held this week. The company also reported on the progress of these developments at the Department of Energy's (DOE) Peer Review Program.

The events were part of the annual "Fuel Cell Week" activities in Washington, sponsored by the U.S. Fuel Cell Council and DOE.

3M's nano-structured catalyst, which is in the development stage, is considered a potentially important advance in fuel cell membrane technology because the extreme thinness of the electrode helps achieve very-high power density. Research and development in this area has been supported, in part, by DOE.

Also presented by 3M during the Peer Review Program are new advancements in MEA durability for longer-life fuel cells, including 3M's new gas diffusion layer (GDL) architecture and new-process methods and materials that improve GDL stability by providing greater resistance to oxidation.

More than 30 fuel cell industry leaders took part in the expo, which was open to the public at the Cannon House Office Building, 1st Street and Independence Avenue, S.E.

"3M is devoting substantial research and development (R&D) and commercialization efforts, including significant manufacturing capability to fuel cell components in order to help this exciting technology achieve its full potential," says Dr. Eric Funkenbusch, business director for 3M's Fuel Cell Program. "The company's strength in materials R&D and manufacturing integration enables us to tap into a broad range of core competencies and technology platforms, including fluoromaterials/polymers, adhesives, microreplication, and porous materials and membranes, in addition to the previously mentioned technologies."

Speaking with regard to practical applications, Dr. Funkenbusch observes: "Technology and commercialization are making steady progress on several fronts, and fuel cells already are becoming a reliable power source for emergency back-up power and other stationary applications as well as in vehicles. Fuel cells also offer exciting possibilities in extending run-times for hand-held devices.

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