



News Release -- FOR RELEASE SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

For more information please contact:

SCRA
Russ Keller
843.760.4358
kellerr@scra.org

The Greater Columbia Fuel Cell Challenge Announces 2009 Call for White Papers

White paper submissions due Wednesday, November 5

Columbia, SC, September 25, 2008 – On behalf of the USC Columbia Fuel Cell Collaborative, SCRA announced yesterday that it is accepting white papers for the Greater Columbia Fuel Cell Challenge 2009 for projects focused on commercializing hydrogen and fuel cell technologies in and around Columbia, South Carolina. The call for white papers was issued at the 2008 National Hydrogen Association Fall Forum, “Hydrogen from Renewables” being held this week in Golden, Colorado.

This solicitation launches the third annual installment of the Fuel Cell Challenge. With a total anticipated funding availability between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000, the Fuel Cell Challenge 2009 will focus on accelerating the region’s efforts to become a premier destination for hydrogen and fuel cell innovation in the country. “This project demonstrates how successful collaborations within South Carolina continue to grow our state’s knowledge economy,” said Bill Mahoney, SCRA CEO. “The partnerships assembled under the banner of the Greater Columbia Fuel Cell Challenge are turning innovative ideas from researchers and companies across the nation into significant economic opportunities, both in the Midlands of South Carolina as well as across the state.”

Based upon a merit review of white papers received, invitations to submit full proposals will be issued in late November or early December, 2008. A major factor in ultimate award selection will be on how the proposed project would lead to generation of new jobs and/or creation of new or spin-off companies in near-term hydrogen and fuel cell commercial market segments.

Challenge will focus on expanding the innovation pipeline

The Greater Columbia Fuel Cell Challenge was launched in 2006 to help create and expand an “innovation pipeline” for fuel cell technology, which include efforts to build a critical mass of research knowledge (the discovery phase), commercialize the fruits of that research in specific applications for product creation and company formation (the development phase), and then create incentives to grow and attract industries into enterprise clusters (the deployment phase). Potential activities for this new phase of the Challenge will align with these three broad innovation pipeline categories:

Discovery: The focus of the discovery phase will be on creating intellectual property by fostering research partnerships and activities, promoting educational awareness and outreach within the K-12 schools, technical and four-year college and business communities, and incentivizing individuals and groups to direct their talents and imagination toward fuel cell related technology.

Development: The focus of the development phase will be on establishing a local business and entrepreneurial environment conducive to company formation and successful start-up centered on the intellectual property developed at or in partnership with the University of South Carolina.

Deployment: The focus of the deployment phase will be on creating a commercial market for fuel cell products that, in turn, will drive fuel cell industry growth and create an economic “cluster” of fuel cell companies. This is a long term goal; in the near term the Challenge will focus on demonstrating the largest possible variety of market ready or near market ready fuel cell technologies and applications across the stationary power, portable power and transportation application spectrum, and connecting those demonstrations with the comprehensive “end-to-end” vision for the future of the Columbia region.

“The Fuel Cell Challenge is about the power of ideas and innovation,” said Neil McLean, Executive Director of EngenuitySC. “It may originate in Columbia, SC, but we’re hoping to connect to ideas in any lab, company, or region in the world.”

The Fuel Cell Challenge 2009 seeks to build upon the successes achieved in the first two years of this initiative, during which more than \$4 million has been invested in hydrogen and fuel cell technologies. Fuel Cell Challenge awards to date include:

- 10 awards in 2006 - the first year of the program
- 4 awards in 2007
- The Columbia hydrogen fueling station is under contract for delivery in first quarter of 2009.
- The FTA National Fuel Cell Bus Program will demonstrate a hybrid battery-fuel cell bus in Columbia for a year, beginning in the first quarter of 2009

Areas of particular interest for Fuel Cell Challenge 2009 include:

- Hydrogen production from renewable sources
- A transportation project affiliated with the Columbia hydrogen fueling station
- A high visibility stationary power project that could be sited in the University of South Carolina’s new research campus facilities (“Innovista”) in the heart of downtown Columbia

Capitalizing on an International Spotlight

The activities of Fuel Cell Challenge 2009 will provide an international showcase for these and other fuel cell technologies, as Columbia gears up for the national and international spotlight as host city for the National Hydrogen Association’s 2009 annual conference. The conference represents largest and longest running hydrogen conference in the U.S., with more than 1500 representatives from around the world, including significant representation from major energy, automotive, and hydrogen/fuel cell market leaders, expected to attend.

Bob Coble, Mayor of the City of Columbia stated, “The City of Columbia is dedicated to breaking down the barriers to technology transition and to being a city that embraces innovative solutions and the companies and entrepreneurs that bring them to the world.”

For more information on the Greater Columbia Fuel Cell Challenge, and the Fuel Cell Challenge 2009 Call for White Papers, visit the challenge website at www.fuelcellchallenge.com.

###

About the USC Columbia Fuel Cell Collaborative

The University of South Carolina – City of Columbia Fuel Cell Collaborative was formed by the University of South Carolina, the City of Columbia, EngenuitySC and the South Carolina Research Authority to position Columbia, SC as a leader in hydrogen fuel cell innovation and technology. Its mission is to attract private sector partners, top fuel cell scientists, entrepreneurs and innovators to the Columbia region. For more information, visit: www.fuelcellchallenge.com

About the University of South Carolina

The University of South Carolina is dedicated to building the knowledge economy in South Carolina by attracting the world’s top professors, scientists, students and entrepreneurs to Columbia, SC. Through its new Innovation district called Innovista, the University is supporting research initiatives in nanotechnology, health sciences, Future Fuels™, the environment, and information and knowledge technologies. For more information, visit: www.sc.edu

About the City of Columbia

The City of Columbia is as rich in cultural heritage and history as it is with talent and opportunity. The City of Columbia is dedicated to the advancement of the knowledge economy in the midlands region through its partnership in the USC Columbia Fuel Cell Collaborative, its award winning technology incubator, and its commitment to entrepreneurship and innovation. The city fully supports the creation of the first integrated fuel cell district in the country and is committed to making Columbia a business friendly environment for innovative companies. For more information, visit: www.columbiasc.net

About EngenuitySC

EngenuitySC is an active public/private sector partnership focused on nurturing the growth of a knowledge-based economy in the Columbia, SC region. Comprised of business and industry leaders, along with representatives from local government and academia, EngenuitySC strives to create a fertile business climate that encourages entrepreneurship and the commercialization of ideas and technology, harnesses the research breakthroughs of higher education institutions, establishes public policy that is sensitive to the unique needs of knowledge-based companies, and promotes access to start-up investment capital. For more information, visit: www.engenuitysc.com

About SCRA

SCRA is a global leader in applied research and commercialization services with offices in Anderson, Charleston, and Columbia. SCRA collaborates to advance technology with industry, government, and research universities like Clemson University, the University of South Carolina and the Medical University of South Carolina. For more information, visit: www.scra.org