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South Carolina Lands National Hydrogen Association Annual Conference in Columbia for 2009

The South Carolina Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Alliance (SCHFCA) comprised of USC, Savannah River National Laboratory, Clemson University, South Carolina State University, and The Center for Hydrogen Research and allies wins proposal to host the NHA Annual Conference in 2009.

Columbia, SC - The National Hydrogen Association headquartered in Washington, DC announced that it has selected Columbia, SC to host its annual conference in 2009. Over 1200 attendees are expected to travel from around the world to attend this conference according to NHA forecasted registration numbers. The SCHFCA submitted a proposal the NHA Board of Directors indicating its interest in hosting the event. The University of South Carolina, as one of the NHA member institutions and a member of the NHA Board of Directors assisted the SCHFCA in its efforts. The university's developments with its *Innovista* innovation district and the Center for Hydrogen Research in Aiken helped cement the NHA's decision to bring the conference to Columbia because of the many hydrogen and fuel cell related attractions that will be available to attendees.

Also assisting the Alliance in securing the conference was the Columbia Convention Center Bureau, EngenuitySC, the South Carolina Research Authority, The SC Department of Commerce, and the City of Columbia.

The complimentary areas of expertise in hydrogen and fuel cells that exist in South Carolina among the SCHFCA members was a major factor in the conference coming to Columbia. The SCHFCA boasts of world-class technology leadership with the nation's only Industry/University Cooperative Research Center for Fuel Cells at USC which is funded by the National Science Foundation, the nation's largest staff of hydrogen storage and production scientists at the Savannah River National Laboratory and Center for Hydrogen Research, and Clemson University and the Clemson University-International Center for Automotive Research and its automotive expertise. Collaboration among the various member organizations has been a top priority.

The 2009 Annual NHA Conference is expected to catapult the state's many related hydrogen and fuel cell initiatives to national prominence. Fred Humes, Chairman of the Board of Directors for the SCHFCA said "the selection of South Carolina and Columbia as the site of the Annual NHA Conference is a great step forward in the state's efforts to establish itself as one of the leaders in the hydrogen economy." He added, "it is a recognition of the work the state and the organization have accomplished in just a few months' time. Since our inception in January of this year all our members and allies have worked hard to promote South Carolina's capability in hydrogen and fuel cell technology."

The economic benefit to the City of Columbia hosting a conference of this size will be significant. Hotels, restaurants and attractions in the Midlands all stand to gain from a conference of this magnitude.

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