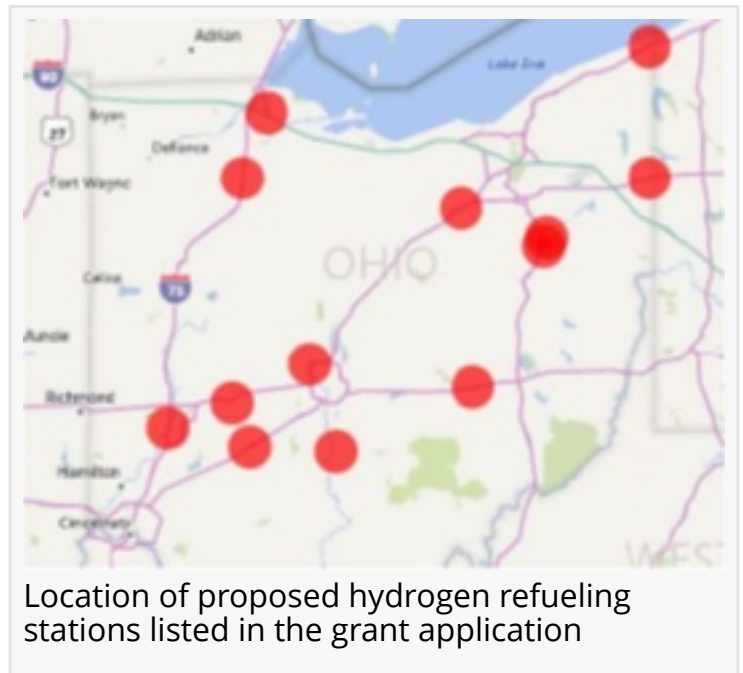


Hydrogen fuel cell consortium seeking grant to drive transportation revolution, create 65,000 jobs in Ohio

Stark Area Regional Transit Authority, Love's Travel Stops seek grant to build hydrogen fuel cell, electric, and CNG refueling facilities in Ohio and Michigan.

CANTON, OHIO, UNITED STATES, August 15, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Long a trailblazer in the development and deployment of vehicles powered by alternative fuels, the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) is leading a unique public-private partnership that will lead to the construction of at least 13 hydrogen, electric, and compressed natural gas (CNG) refueling facilities along highways in Ohio and Southern Michigan.

As a first step in the process, the SARTA-led consortium recently applied for a multi-million-dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. If approved the grant will provide the funds needed to take the project from an exciting vision shared by a variety of companies and agencies to a job-creating, pollution-reducing reality within five years. The grant application and supporting documents may be viewed at www.midwesthydrogen.org/



Location of proposed hydrogen refueling stations listed in the grant application

According to SARTA CEO Kirt Conrad, the consortium members, including Love's Travel Stops, the Ohio Turnpike, CALSTART, Clean Fuels Ohio, Cleveland State University, and the Ohio Fuel Cell Coalition, will use the grant money to draft the Midwest States Alternative Fuel Transportation Corridor Action Plan. When completed, the plan will facilitate the creation of a corridor that will make it possible for the owners and operators of electric, fuel cell electric and CNG-powered automobiles, trucks, and buses to easily refuel as they travel across the major transportation arteries in Ohio and Michigan.

"It is universally recognized that the use of alternative fuel vehicles will stimulate economic development, spur domestic production of natural gas, slash our nation's reliance on imported oil, and reduce emissions," Mr. Conrad said. "But one factor is holding back what should be rapid growth in the industry: range anxiety."

"Both commercial carriers and private individuals are reluctant to buy alternative fuel-powered vehicles because they aren't sure they'll be able to recharge or refuel them once they're on the road," he explained. "Creating the corridor we envision will relieve that anxiety and ignite sales which in turn will drive the creation of as many as 65,000 good-paying alternative fuel-related jobs in Ohio alone."

Love Travel Stops' involvement is key to the grant proposal and the long-range success of the project. If the grant application is approved, the privately-owned company, which operates more than 450 truck stops and convenience stores located along rural and urban highways in 41 states, will begin the design and planning process needed to add a mix of refueling and recharging technologies to its facilities along I-71, I-75, and I-80 in Ohio and Southern Michigan. Mr. Conrad said the hundreds of millions of dollars being invested in R&D by General Motors, Honda, Toyota, Ford and other vehicle producers clearly indicate that electricity and CNG are the fuels of the future. "The only remaining barrier to massive growth in the hydrogen fuel cell-powered vehicle sector is the lack of refueling infrastructure. Once that barrier is overcome, a wave of change is going to wash across the transportation industry that will rival the transition from the horse and buggy to the automobile. Our goal is to ensure that Ohio is positioned to ride that wave for decades to come."

Along with the members of the consortium applying for the grant, a diverse group of associations, companies, and elected officials including the Ohio Oil and Gas Association, Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., the Renewable Hydrogen Fuel Cells Collaborative, Clean Fuels Michigan, Stark State College, Senators Sherrod Brown and Rob Portman as well as Congressmen Jim Renacci and Bob Gibbs have written to Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao urging her to approve the grant application.

"I and the other members of the consortium are gratified by the support we've received from so many outstanding groups, corporations, and community leaders," Mr. Conrad said. "They, like us, recognize the nearly unlimited potential for growth in the alternative fuels and related industries. Together, we're going to seize the opportunity to drive and benefit from the transportation revolution that is just around the corner."

About the Grant Partners

SARTA, the transit authority serving Stark County, Ohio, is acquiring and deploying what will be the second largest fleet of hydrogen fuel cell buses operating in the United States. More than \$10 million in two grants from the Federal Transit Administration's Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Program and over \$1 million in state funding enabled SARTA to acquire the buses and construct a hydrogen fueling station at the authority's headquarters in Canton, Ohio.

Love's Travel Stops maintains over 460 locations in 41 states. Love's acquired Trillium, a CNG and renewable fuels infrastructure developer and facility operator in 2016. Trillium's focus includes the deployment of alternative fueling infrastructure, including hydrogen and electric vehicle charging. In conjunction with this project, Love's will provide sites and resources for the planning and ultimate installation of at least 10 alternative refueling facilities.

CALSTART is North America's leading advanced transportation technologies consortium. It is a fuel-neutral partnership-supported non-profit organization comprised of more than 190 firms and organizations. An effective catalyst for the global advanced transportation technology industry for two decades, CALSTART supports public-private partnerships and innovative funding and implementation strategies in the advanced transportation industry.

Clean Fuels Ohio is a state-wide, non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening Ohio's economy while improving air quality and health, reducing environmental pollution, and enhancing our nation's energy security by promoting and encouraging the use of cleaner, domestic fuels, and efficient vehicles.

Ohio Fuel Cell Coalition is comprised of industry, academic, and government leaders who work collectively to strengthen Ohio's fuel cell industry and transform the region into a global leader in fuel cell technology. The Coalition strives to advance the integration of a coordinated, robust fuel cell infrastructure and supply chain by supporting industry/academic partnerships devoted to R&D, advanced manufacturing, advanced materials technologies, components, and services.

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