

State among top 5 in fuel cells

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Paul Oei, Vice President of the Service Group of Fuel Cell Energy Inc. in Danbury stands with a Fuel cell being readied for delivery to a customer. FuelCell Energy will install four 1.4 megawatt fuel cell power plants at four state universities in California -- CSU-East Bay, San Fran State, CSU-San Bernardino and CSU-Long Beach. Photo: ST, David W. Harple / CT

Connecticut may one day be called the Fuel Cell State.

Fuel Cells 2000, a Washington-based advocacy group for the fuel cell industry, has recognized the state as one of the "Top Five Fuel Cell States" in a new report for being home to several major fuel cell manufacturers, having high-profile fuel cell installations and offering substantial financial support for fuel cell power generation.

"If you listed the major fuel cell companies in the United States, you'd find that most of them are in Connecticut," said [Jennifer Gangi](#), program director for [Fuel Cells 2000](#). "It gives a lot of hope to U.S. manufacturing and green manufacturing jobs."

Gangi said the state has about a dozen fuel cell manufacturers and designers, including two of the largest commercial producers -- [FuelCell Energy Inc.](#) in Danbury and UTC Power in South Windsor.

"Connecticut is a world leader in fuel cell manufacturing," she said.

Other fuel cell manufacturers in Connecticut include Proton Energy Systems in Wallingford and Infinity Fuel Cell and [Hydrogen LLC](#) in Windsor.

The state also has as many as 60 companies involved in the design of fuel cell components, such as Fuel Cell Perspectives in Hartford, said [Joel Reinbold](#), chairman of the [Connecticut Hydrogen-Fuel Cell Coalition](#).

"They're very directly related to the fuel cell industry," Reinbold said, adding that about 13 percent of the industry's jobs worldwide -- about 3,000 positions -- are in Connecticut. "If there's a large stationary fuel cell installation somewhere in the world, it was probably made in Connecticut," he said. "That's a claim to fame you can't walk away from."

Direct FuelCell power plants developed by FuelCell Energy, which was founded in 1969 as Energy Research Corp., have generated more than 400 million kilowatt hours of electricity. FuelCell Energy has more than 55 installations worldwide.

"Connecticut recognizes that fuel cells can be a major part of addressing the world's energy issues," said [Joseph Mahler](#), senior vice president and chief financial officer of FuelCell Energy. "Fuel cells produce reliable, base-load electricity more efficiently and cleanly than other technologies."

Large fuel cell installations in Connecticut include the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford, Cabela's Sporting Goods in East Hartford, Pepperidge Farm Bakery in Glastonbury and [Eastern Connecticut State University](#) in Willimantic.

Most state funding for fuel cell installations comes from the [Connecticut Clean Energy Fund](#), Reinbold said.

The four other states in the top five are, in alphabetical order, California, New York, Ohio and South Carolina.

California is recognized for strong support of fuel cell power generation using renewable fuels and New York has a long history of support for fuel cell research and deployment, according to Fuel Cells 2000. South Carolina universities are collaborating on an aggressive economic development program and activism in forklift demonstrations.