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EMTEC may land \$3M more for fuel cells

Dayton Business Journal - December 10, 2004 by [Brian Womack](#) DBJ Senior Reporter

Officials at Kettering-based [Edison Materials Technology Center](#), or EMTEC, expect to land another \$3 million from the federal government for fuel cell research efforts.

The money would be used to fund companies that could accelerate the commercialization of fuel cells, which are powered by hydrogen and are an alternative energy source to oil and other traditional power sources. With this grant -- which still needs final budget approval -- EMTEC will have received more than \$6 million for fuel cell research.

Frank Svet, president and chief executive officer of EMTEC, said the latest federal grant is a vote of confidence for the center, which helps fund research and commercialization of various materials.

"I think it elevates our status in the industry as a recognized player in technology development and commercialization," Svet said.

Svet added he likely would add three people to his staff of 32 because of the grant.

This award would follow a similar \$3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy at the end of last year that also added three people to EMTEC's staff. In addition, the center recently learned it landed a state grant of \$719,200 to bolster Ohio's standing in the fuel cell industry.

Svet said the fuel cell community has been developing fresh technologies, but so far has failed to hit the big time with a way to mass produce the cells at a low price for applications such as vehicle power.

"There are still two major barriers to broad acceptance, and the first is cost and the second reliability," Svet said.

Bernadette Geyer, director of outreach programs at the U.S. Fuel Council in Washington, D.C., said she's optimistic fuel cells eventually will become a mainstream product used in everything from electronic devices to cars. A recent survey said sales of fuel cell-related products were up 41 percent in 2003 compared to 2002.

"For us, the numbers show that the technology is feasible," Geyer said.

EMTEC is using the \$3 million in its first grant to fund companies that can speed the process to make fuel cells more widespread, Svet said.

So far, he said eight small- and medium-sized Ohio companies have landed about \$1 million of the \$3 million grant, though he did not identify them. He said Ohio companies have some of the best parts for making fuel cells, including motors, fans and pumps. The center is reviewing candidates for the rest of the grant and will make those decisions by summer of next year.

With the new grant, EMTEC will continue funding young companies around the country, he said.

"We're looking for good science with near-term commercialization potential," he said.

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