

PPL Bringing Fuel Cell Technology to Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod

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A PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL) subsidiary will install a clean, dependable fuel cell energy system at one of the largest U.S. Coast Guard air stations on the East Coast, the company announced on Thursday (10/18).

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/19981015/PHTH025>)

The 250-kilowatt fuel cell system -- similar to the technology that helps power the space shuttle -- will be installed at Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod in Bourne, Mass. It will provide electricity to the station, including its hangars and administrative buildings, and supply hot water for use in the air station's barracks.

The system will be provided by PPL Spectrum Inc., a distributed generation and energy services arm of PPL EnergyPlus LLC. PPL EnergyPlus is an unregulated subsidiary of PPL Corporation that provides energy solutions to a growing list of industrial and commercial customers and markets and trades wholesale energy commodity products in 42 states and Canada.

The Coast Guard turned to PPL for this on-site fuel cell system because it needed a power source its personnel can count on, particularly when fierce Atlantic storms knock out power on the traditional electricity grid.

"As part of GenSelect(SM) -- PPL's innovative distributed generation program -- we're bringing new, efficient and environmentally friendly energy technology such as fuel cells to our customers," said Larry De Simone, PPL's executive vice president-Supply.

Distributed generation is a term that refers to a variety of energy supply options to meet customers' particular energy needs.

"Less than a decade ago, this type of energy technology was not available commercially and its practical use was very limited," De Simone said. "But fuel cells are now part of a growing range of energy solutions that PPL can provide, including diesel generators and microturbines."

Fuel cells -- which produce power using the hydrogen contained in natural gas in a chemical reaction -- are helping solve the energy needs in unique locations such as this air station on Cape Cod, he said.

"PPL is proud to outfit Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod with efficient generation that's not dependent on the local grid," De Simone added. "That becomes so important when these skilled pilots face life-and-death rescue operations -- their maritime missions demand a system that will be ready and reliable."

"We're pleased to have awarded a contract for the first fuel cell installation at a Coast Guard shore facility," said Lt. Cmdr. Mike Walz of the Coast Guard's Research and Development Center in Groton, Conn. "I'm hopeful that this fuel cell will prove to be a reliable power source for the air station, reduce their overall energy costs and serve as a model for future installations at other Coast Guard units."

De Simone said the unique new energy alliance between PPL, the United States government and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is an example of PPL's belief in reaching out to partners beyond its traditional sphere to cultivate the next generation of power supply.

Funding for this \$1.7 million project will come from a variety of federal, state and private sources that support new, emerging energy technologies.

B-G Mechanical Contractors of Chicopee, Mass., one of PPL EnergyPlus' regional mechanical contractors, will install a Direct FuelCell® provided by FuelCell Energy Inc. (NASDAQ: FCEL) of Danbury, Conn. PPL has an equity investment in FuelCell Energy and is a distributor of its fuel cells in North America. The Cape Cod project is expected to be completed in the spring of 2002.

Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod is one of the largest air stations on the East Coast, flying both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters in support of its search and rescue and maritime law enforcement operations and other missions. Its crews protect life and property from the Canadian border to Long Island, N.Y., and provide logistics support for offshore lighthouses in New England.

PPL EnergyPlus LLC is a subsidiary of PPL Corporation. Headquartered in Allentown, Pa., PPL Corporation generates electricity at power plants in Pennsylvania, Maine and Montana; provides distributed generation and energy services throughout the U.S.; markets wholesale or retail energy in 42 U.S. states and Canada; and delivers electricity to nearly 6 million customers in Pennsylvania, the United Kingdom and Latin America.

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