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Are Fuel Cells the Future of Flight?

Mukilteo, Washington – May 28, 2008 - The Future of Flight Foundation is hosting an evening with experts that launched The Boeing Company's historic flight of a manned airplane (DA20) powered by hydrogen fuel cells. Both the aircraft and the specialists that made the technology possible will be on hand on June 11, 2008, between 6:30 – 9:15pm at the Future of Flight, 8415 Paine Field Blvd., Mukilteo, WA 98275 to talk about the innovation, imagination and hard work that went into making this aviation milestone possible. The public is welcome. Space is limited. Admission is free.

In early April 2008 in Madrid, Spain, The Boeing Company, for the first time in aviation history, successfully flew a manned airplane (DA20) powered by hydrogen fuel cells. The aircraft is two-seat Dimona motor-glider (DA20) with a 16.3 meter (53.5 foot) wingspan, which is built by Diamond Aircraft Industries of Austria, was modified by BR&TE to include a Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) fuel cell/lithium-ion battery hybrid system to power an electric motor coupled to a conventional propeller.

During the flights, the pilot of the experimental airplane climbed to an altitude of 1,000 meters (3,300 feet) above sea level using a combination of battery power and power generated by hydrogen fuel cells. Then, after reaching the cruise altitude and disconnecting the batteries, the pilot flew straight and level at a cruising speed of 100 kilometers per hour (62 miles per hour) for approximately 20 minutes on power solely generated by the fuel cells. A fuel cell is an electrochemical device that converts hydrogen directly into electricity and heat with none of the products of combustion such as carbon dioxide. Other than heat, water is its only exhaust.

Image available at http://www.boeing.com/news/releases/2008/q2/080403a_pr.html.

Schedule of events:

6:30 - Doors open for Visitors to Arrive / Review overview literature / Tour aircraft
7:00 - Welcome / Introductions
7:15 - Environmental Vision / Strategy Synopsis
7:30 - BR&TE Presentation

- Fuel cell basics
- Li-ion basics
- Objectives for the project
- Highlights of the design / test effort
- Qualification / Certification process (analysis --> ground test --> flight test)
- Flight test
- Results (test highlights, general observations regarding fuel cell performance, next steps)

8:30 - Questions from the seated audience
8:45 - Closing remarks/Tour aircraft
9:15 – Program ends