

Times-Standard

Hydrogen car tested at HSU

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Humboldt State University's Schatz Energy Research Center is road testing a smog-free, hydrogen-powered Toyota fuel cell hybrid vehicle as part of an effort to commercialize the smog-free car in five years.

The Schatz Energy Research Center operates a hydrogen fueling station on campus that is the northernmost link in California's emerging Hydrogen Highway, a network of such stations that could eventually allow hydrogen-powered vehicles to travel across the state, according to an HSU press release.

Known officially as the Toyota Fuel Cell Hybrid Vehicle and built on the Highlander's mid-sized sport utility vehicle platform, the car uses the same hybrid technology as the Toyota Prius, which the Schatz Center also operates. The car -- known as the FCHV-adv -- is designed to provide extended driving range when compared with previous generations, according to the press release. The Schatz Energy Research Center is collaborating with the University of California, Berkeley, and Toyota Motor Engineering and Manufacturing, North America, to test and demonstrate the vehicle.

The FCHV-adv's fuel cell system consists of a 100-kilowatt fuel cell, four hydrogen fuel tanks, an electric motor, a nickel-metal hydride battery and a power control unit. The latter governs the division of energy between the battery and the fuel cell stack to power the vehicle.

The longer driving range stems from higher pressure and improved fuel cell efficiency, according to Berkeley's Tim Lipman.

Toyota's hydrogen fuel cell hybrid vehicles have been subjected to 300,000 miles of road and test track evaluation and rigorous crash testing, according to HSU.

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