

## **TEXAS A&M TO STUDY FUEL CELL AT PORT**

In the quest to cultivate clean energy sources to benefit Galveston and the surrounding area, the Port of Galveston and Texas A&M University at Galveston have joined as partners in a new program intended to gain insight into power generation.

Last year, a program was developed by the Department of Defense (DOD) to provide non-profit, educational institutions with fuel cells with the requirement that a curriculum be developed to teach this new technology and report the effectiveness of the equipment to the government.

A fuel cell, which uses hydrogen separated from methane gas to produce electricity, was transferred to the university by the DOD and has been installed on the Port of Galveston at Pier 27 just west of Cruise Terminal No. 1. The Port is in the process of tying it into the electrical system to be used as a backup energy source. At the time, the teaching curriculum will go forward and the Port will begin to benefit from the project. Tech and Maritime System Engineering students will oversee the operation of this alternative fuel source and report back to the federal government.

“This project gives A&M a very unique training-and-learning platform,” stated Dr. Brad McGonagle, Vice President of Administrative for A&M. “Our students will be able to engage in an interactive learning environment while monitoring the fuel cell’s operation for the port. We feel that we are very lucky to be able to participate in this rare learning opportunity. A&M Galveston appreciates all the Port of Galveston has done to advance this program for the university. In particular, we are very appreciative of the efforts of Benny Holland, Steve Cernak and Bernie Curran so that this has become a reality for us.”

“Although the fuel cell was given to the university, we do not have the financial resources to install the system on our campus,” added Dr. McGonagle. “We were delighted when we learned that the Port of Galveston was interested in the use of clean energy and realized that they were also interested in advancing education. They made the decision to install the cell on port property and allow our students access to the cell as a laboratory. These students will help develop clean-burning energy sources for the future. We feel very strongly that this opportunity would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Board and staff of the Port.”

George King, an adjunct professor in Marine Sciences and Maritime Systems Engineering programs, began teaching the classes last fall without the benefit of the working laboratory. This fall the classes will benefit from the new laboratory environment. Between 40 and 50 students are expected to participate in the program.

Texas A&M is now working with Moody Gardens and the Environmental Protection Agency on another fuel cell for Moody Gardens. UTMB is also currently benefiting from the use of two fuel cells.