

Coalition to develop fuel cell offers opportunity for state

In his State of the State speech last week, Gov. John Engler talked glowingly about making Michigan the center for research and development of clean-burning hydrogen fuel cells to power cars.

He was responding to a growing consensus in the auto industry that fuel cell powertrains really are the wave of the future. A major development was U.S. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham's announcement three weeks ago of the Freedom Cooperative Automotive Research (Freedom CAR), a public-private group linking the government, the auto companies and the U.S. Council on Automotive Research to work in developing affordable hydrogen-based



Phil Power

fuel cell technology.

"Michigan's stake in the transformation of the auto industry cannot be overstated," said Engler. "The coming transformation means a new generation of vehicles. The new vehicles will require a new generation of engineers to design them, a new generation of plants to assemble them, and a new generation of workers to build them."

Engler's right. The stakes for Michigan are very, very big, especially when you realize that there are 10 engine plants and five transmission plants in Michigan, employing some 27,000 people — all based on gasoline-fueled internal combustion engine powertrains that might well become obsolete in a decade.

"You can't just assume that Michigan will become a leader in fuel cell technology," says Michigan Economic Development Cooperation CEO Doug Rothwell. "Although Michigan is plainly the center of the American auto industry, we don't necessarily have inherent strengths in fuel cell technology. This means we've got to be proactive."

Engler is expected to propose a detailed plan in the next couple of months to make detailed proposals about how to make Michigan the center for fuel cell research and development.

A look at Michigan's economic history provides some context for all this. In the 19th century, the first two waves of economic development centered on extracting natural resources, first exploiting the copper and iron ore deposits in the Upper Peninsula and next cutting the vast forests of the northern part of the state. The cap-

ital created by these two early industries formed the economic underpinnings for the development of our auto industry in the early part of the 20th century.

Since then, economic policy makers have been searching for the next big industry to power the state's economic progress.

A leading candidate — biotechnology — emerged over the past decade. Stimulated by the MEDC, supported by Gov. Engler and financed by money from the national tobacco settlement, the state has poured some \$50 million per year into the "Life Sciences Corridor," running from Detroit through Ann Arbor and East Lansing to Grand Rapids. The University of Michigan, for example, is in the middle of building a \$200 million Life Sciences Center on the central campus, while the city of Ann Arbor just granted a tax abatement to encourage pharmaceutical giant

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Pfizer to expand greatly its research labs.

Sleeping question whether trying to graft an entire biotech industry onto a relatively limited existing base of company and infrastructure support will really work.

That's one of the great advantages of a economic strategy based on fuel cells for automobiles: We're not starting from scratch. Michigan already has a whole of a lot of automotive skill, experience and institutional momentum in the industry, and extending all that into a new kind of powertrain technology seems a logical thing to do.

This suggests a two-pronged fuel cell strategy for Michigan. Offensively, the idea is to build — promptly, firmly, immediately — on our technological and manufacturing strengths in the auto industry. Defensively, the goal is to get so far ahead that nobody else can catch up.

It's an exciting prospect. I'm looking forward to seeing the Governor's proposals as a centerpiece for building a big coalition — auto companies, the supply chain, organized labor, the universities — to help Michigan's future.

Phil Power is chairman of HomeTown Communications Network Inc., the company that owns this newspaper. He welcomes your comments, either by voice mail at (734) 963-2047, ext. 1880, or by e-mail at ppower@homecomm.net.



Phil Neuman

in school by about 7:30 a.m. Chances are also good that even though the wake-up call is early, your child goes to sleep fairly late at night. There's a scientific reason behind that night owl of yours.

Researchers have identified several changes in sleep patterns, sleep/wake systems and biological rhythms associated with adolescence. Scientific studies have shown that the changes in a teenager's sleep patterns contribute to excessive sleepiness that has a negative impact on the adolescent's daytime functioning.

Research indicates that when people get more sleep they are more alert for listening, test taking, reading and class participation. More sleep lessens the immune system, improving health, decreasing illness and increasing attendance. Alert teenagers are more able to cope with emotional stress and experience less depression when they have more sleep. In short, there are a lot of benefits to giving teenagers the opportunity to get more sleep.

A group of concerned parents, students and teachers, led by Dr. C. Robert Maxfield, Superintendent of Farmington Public Schools, has formed the School Start Time Committee to study the possibility of changing school start times for Farmington Public Schools no earlier than the 2003-2004 school year. The Committee is chaired by Michelle Harris, a teacher at Harrison High School. Michelle has observed first-hand the effects of sleep deprivation of students in her early morning classes.

There are several sub-committees tackling various aspects of the study. The Teaching and Learning Subcommittee was asked to determine if a later start time for teen-age students would benefit the teaching and learning experience in Farmington Public Schools. Based on the available research, this subcommittee recommends that high school start times be changed by at least one hour.

The Co-Curricular Subcommittee has the task of contacting other school districts, sponsors of after-school activities and employers to determine their needs and whether it is feasible to change school start times. On the whole, it appears that adjustments can be made successfully with other districts in regard to sports schedules. Other activities are being reviewed to determine if they can accommodate the change.

Make your voice heard at School Start Time forum

If you have a teenager in your home, the chances are pretty good that you have a hard time getting your child to wake up in the morning, particularly on school days when your child has to be in school by about 7:30 a.m. Chances are also good that even though the wake-up call is early, your child goes to sleep fairly late at night. There's a scientific reason behind that night owl of yours.

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The Transportation Subcommittee is responsible for examining the transportation issues that are so critical to the determination of whether it is possible to change school start times in light of the district's existing transportation system and resources. This subcommittee has suggested two proposals for changing high school start times.

It should be emphasized that these are just proposals — nothing is set in stone, and there are other possibilities being explored. One proposal would have the high schools all start at 8:30 a.m., while the middle schools would continue their current 7:40 a.m. start time, and nine elementary schools would begin at 8:03 a.m. (which is the current earliest starting time for elementary schools) while four others would begin at 8:52 a.m.

This proposal carries a price tag of about \$840,000.00 in the first year of the change and about \$250,000.00 each additional year. Another proposal would have the high schools all start at 9:00 a.m., the middle schools continue at 7:40 a.m. and three tiers of elementary school start times, with nine schools starting at 8:03 a.m., three schools starting at 8:20 a.m. and one school starting at 8:52 a.m.

This proposal carries a price tag of about \$400,000 the first year and about \$170,000 each additional year. I am honored to be the chairperson of the Community Outreach Subcommittee. Our subcommittee is responsible for informing the community about the work of the Committee and soliciting feedback from all of the stakeholders before a final recommendation is made to the Farmington Board of Education. That's where you come in.

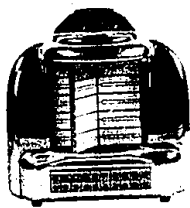
The Community Outreach Subcommittee is hosting a Town Hall meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, at the William Costick Center. Like Uncle Sam said many years ago, "We Need You!" It is so important for us to hear what members of the community think about changing school start times. This is your opportunity to learn more about the possibility of a change and to tell us your point of view.

The School Start Time Committee has made a great deal of progress in exploring all of the issues surrounding changing school start times. I believe that this momentum should not be allowed to falter. Once we have heard from the community and explored the options, the Committee will be in a position to make a recommendation to the Board of Education.

I hope you will take the time to attend the Town Hall meeting, become informed on this very important issue. Your sleepy kids deserve it!

Phil Neuman is an active Farmington Public Schools parent and former candidate for school board, who currently serves on the district's School Start Time Committee.

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For 1120-1129% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1130-1139% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1140-1149% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1150-1159% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1160-1169% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1170-1179% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1180-1189% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1190-1199% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1200-1209% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1210-1219% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1220-1229% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1230-1239% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1240-1249% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1250-1259% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1260-1269% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1270-1279% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1280-1289% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1290-1299% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1300-1309% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1310-1319% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1320-1329% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1330-1339% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1340-1349% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or the three qualifying for a Prime + 0% rate, with Prime rate for the first three months. For 1350-1359% LTV, introductory rate is 4.25% for three months up to 10% (whichever is less) or