

Plug Power GenDrive™ Fuel Cells Support Green Operations at Central Grocers Distribution Center

Lines of hydrogen fuel cell-powered materials handling equipment and cavernous spaces greet visitors to Central Grocers Inc.'s new distribution center in a Joliet business park. Approximately 2,000 people attended a March 29th grand opening ceremony with the opportunity to see the equipment and tour the corporate headquarters, freezer/cooler space and ambient warehouse.



Plug Power Inc. has supplied 140 Class 3 GenDrive™ power units to Central Grocers for use in their facility. The brand new distribution center is a \$90 million facility, and is just under one million square feet. It is the first grocery warehouse of its kind in the world, where all goods will be handled with fuel cell-powered lift trucks. The pallet trucks will be joined by 80 Class 2 GenDrive power units to be supplied by Plug Power by early 2010.

Air Products & Chemicals Inc of Allentown, Pennsylvania supplied a liquid hydrogen storage compression system and multiple indoor fueling dispensers. The initial fuelings were performed last week.

"All the trucks are delivered and are in operation," says Kal Anglewicz, president of dealership Yale Equipment & Services LLC of Rosemont, Illinois. Central Grocers purchased 220 fuel cell-powered Yale units and is retiring 170 battery-powered forklifts through Yale Equipment.



"This is a great moment not only for our company but for the Chicago area as a whole," says Jim Denges, chief executive officer of Central Grocers.

Central Grocers had operated from a base in Franklin Park, Illinois for 52 years. The move of 35 miles (56 km) to Joliet positions the firm near the intersection of two interstate highways and improves its ability to serve more of the metropolitan Chicago area in Illinois and northwestern Indiana.

Local officials approved abating 50% of the site's property taxes for five years. Also, the cooperative will receive USD3.8-million in state corporate tax credits and USD87,500 for employer training.

Former affiliates of another cooperative, Certified Grocers Inc. of Hodgkins, Illinois, become members of Central Grocers in May. The enlarged organization under the Central Grocers' identity will employ about 500 persons and supply 225 independent businesses operating 450 stores in four states.

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