

CHINA

Weichai Power sets Shandong province on route to ride new-energy boom

By YUAN SHENGGAO

From national fuel cell development to promoting hydrogen energy for the benefit of industry and people's lives, Chinese powertrain manufacturer Weichai Power is dedicated to seeking out achievement in the new energy industry.

In April, the National Fuel Cell Technology Innovation Center was launched in Jinan, Shandong province. Approved by the Ministry of Science and Technology, the center is the first of its kind in China and is led and contracted by Weichai Power.

Focusing on the research and development and application of cutting-edge and key generic technologies, the center is to serve the strategic needs of its industry. It aims to become a first-class international fuel cell technology innovation center that enhances the core competitiveness of China's fuel cells and related industries.

Headquartered in Shandong, the center will have branches across the country and it plans to expand overseas in the future.

The launch of the center came after a long period of evaluation, local officials said. As a national hydrogen energy powerhouse, Shandong's annual production reached 2.6 million metric tons. The province has great potential in the applications of hydrogen energy due to its strong foundation in the industry.

Last year, the province launched its medium and long-term development plan (2020-30). According to it, Shandong will develop into a leading highland for the hydrogen energy industry, helping promote the development of fuel cells and related industries.

Designated a leading role in the center, Weichai Power has a strong industrial basis and innovation capability in the fuel cell industry. It has invested a total of 4 billion yuan (\$617 million) in R&D, and applications in the new energy powertrain segment.

It has led the construction of the Shandong fuel cell technology innovation center, according to local officials.

Taking an active role in hydrogen development in Shandong, Weichai Power has constantly encouraged



Weichai Power puts 150 hydrogen fuel cell buses into operation in Weifang, Shandong province in 2020. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



From left: A hydrogen refueling station in Weifang, Shandong province. A range of Weichai Power's vehicles are on display in front of the Great Hall of Shandong.



the industrial chain for hydrogen energy to be better developed.

In June 2020, Weichai Power put a total of 150 hydrogen fuel cell buses into operation. It operated its first 50 such buses in 2019 in Weifang, Shandong province.

The buses are fueled by the hydrogen energy facility developed by

Weichai Power. The vehicles have a maximum range of 600 kilometers and their fuel cell engine's life span can surpass 20,000 hours, according to the company.

With contributions from Weichai Power, Shandong province established six hydrogen refueling stations and 28 routes of hydrogen fuel

cell buses. In recent years, Shandong has put the development of the hydrogen energy industry high on its agenda, so the province can replace old growth drivers with new ones and gain an edge in new energy technology.

According to the company, it launched the construction of a fuel

cell industrial park in 2018 and completed it in 2020.

With a total investment of 3 billion yuan, it has built nearly 60 facilities for fuel cell R&D and constructed hydrogen fuel cell engines with a production capability of 20,000 units.

In March last year, its hydrogen

cell engine plant was opened, marking a major step for the company to commercialize its business at a top level around the world.

The company said the plant helped Shandong's progress in replacing old growth drivers with new ones.

According to the company's plan, it will put more effort into developing hydrogen-fuel-cell-powered equipment, contribute to the development of the global industry and promote its industrial transformation and upgrading.

With the support of the Ministry of Science and Technology and Shandong province, Weichai Power said it is putting effort into fields such as building teams for new energy R&D and establishing a leading technological innovation center.

Presently, the company has built an industrial chain for hydrogen fuel commercial vehicles that combine batteries, engines and vehicles.

In March, Weichai Power announced it is to cooperate with Fischer Spindle Group, a Swiss manufacturer of fuel cell air compressors, to buy shares in its fuel cell air compressor business and build a joint venture in China.

The partnership is part of Weichai Power's effort to expand its industrial layout in fuel cells and enhance its competitiveness.

The two parties will use their advantages in industrial resources and R&D to provide global users with high-quality products.

Fischer Spindle is a company with nearly 100 years of history and its performance in fuel cell air products has won wide recognition, according to the company.

Weichai Power's efforts to promote fuel cell air compressors in Shandong with hydrogen fuel cell engine technology will contribute to the country's development in hydrogen fuel cell engines, the company said.

Dedicated to contributing to China's goal of peaking carbon emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2060, the company said it has completed the layout of its core technologies of hydrogen fuel cell and solid oxide fuel in the field of new energy.