

PATH Report Card

By Robert Mauro, PATH General Manager

It has been two and a half years since PATH was formed and it is time to critically appraise its performance. Putting aside funding issues that have side-tracked its efforts, the question is whether PATH should continue to be funded by the hydrogen associations of Canada, Japan and the United States. At the close of its fiscal year 2004, PATH will have had the luxury of three years of government funding, which has allowed it to pursue longer term activities that are often atypical for an association. PATH's mission is to form a real and virtual community of interest in hydrogen. It did what any community would do and asked its members for their view of themselves. It used that information to develop a vision which identified that the members shared a commonality in technology needs and had differences in energy policy. It also developed an understanding of the codes and standards of each member country and published those results in the *Hydrogen Codes and Standards Technical Report*.

At the same time, PATH began working with TISEC to expand the *Sourcebook for Hydrogen Applications* to include the Japanese hydrogen experience. It submitted a proposal to APEC, and received funding to expand this effort to include all APEC economies in the *Sourcebook*. This work is now well underway and PATH has discovered that the Sourcebook is becoming a "phonebook" for hydrogen and fuel cell information with email addresses, websites, and contact information. At the completion of the project, the Sourcebook will be accessible via the internet, allowing users to access up-to-date contact information. With available funding, PATH hopes to further expand the Sourcebook to include Europe in order to create a global electronic directory of hydrogen information.

One of PATH's goals is to become involved in hydrogen demonstrations with its member countries to encourage "plug and play" and compliance with international requirements. It had the opportunity to suggest six projects for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Five of these projects were accepted, in modified form, as the basis for hydrogen and renewable activities at the hydrogen park that is being developed in conjunction with the games. A number of NHA, CHA and HESS members are likely to be participants and beneficiaries of these hydrogen and fuel cell demonstration projects.

PATH is also working toward expanding its membership and expanding the international hydrogen community. In early 2003, PATH co-hosted a vision workshop in Mexico with the Mexican Hydrogen Society in which all of PATH's members participated. The attention given to hydrogen by Japan along with Mexico's NAFTA partners helped to put hydrogen on Mexico's radar screen. PATH also participated in the vision meeting for China. In that meeting, PATH presented conclusions of the U.S. vision meeting which, from a technology perspective, was compatible with the conclusions in the PATH vision paper. PATH's activities and plans were also presented at a recent IPHE meeting held in September 2004, in Iceland.

PATH has had less success in getting a few initiatives implemented. PATH has been unable to get the support necessary to move forward with its curriculum development activity. This activity would establish a baseline for what common topics are taught in hydrogen and fuel cell graduate-level courses and develop background material from experts in each study area. There does not seem to be the resources available to carryout such an effort. The original plan for an extensive research exchange network also does not have sufficient funding beyond PATH's partial support for a researcher at an institute in each member country, and perhaps a workshop on collaboration among institutes in member countries.

The nearer term activities that have immediate benefit, such as the expanded Sourcebook and demonstration projects in China, have received support from a variety of organizations,

with a significant role for PATH and its members. PATH also has the ability to bring attention to hydrogen among non-members through joint workshops helping to establish a country hydrogen vision.

PATH has developed positive relationships with hydrogen representatives from a number of countries and governments. Over the years these relationships will have the opportunity to grow, as will support for PATH and its activities.