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## Hydrogen economy players in line for state funding

[By Jason Spencer](#)

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Three separate entities tied to a so-called hydrogen economy -- and South Carolina's place in it -- would receive more than \$3.6 million annually under Gov. Mark Sanford's proposed budget.

Most of it is new money.

The recommendation elevates the importance Columbia places on hydrogen and propels this state into an international race.

The governor's budget earmarks \$2 million a year for the International Center for Automotive Research (ICAR) in Greenville. Another \$1 million would be funneled to the University of South Carolina's hydrogen fuel cell research program based in Columbia. And the state's newly formed Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Alliance would get nearly \$368,000 annually.

That alliance was launched Friday through the state Department of Commerce and ties together virtually every hydrogen player in South Carolina.

"These funds will essentially help in coordinating and focusing our research assets that we have across the state on projects that will have a real national impact," said Chris Przirembel, Clemson University's vice president of research and economic development.

"It's tangible evidence that the governor recognizes this initiative has significant potential for economic development."

The Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Alliance was borne out of past studies and coalitions, and happened with the backing of this state's congressional delegation.

It links the University of South Carolina, Clemson, S.C. State University, and the Savannah River National Laboratory and the new Center for Hydrogen Research, both in Aiken. The idea was to create a part-marketing/part-education overseeing body for commercial and research-based hydrogen initiatives.

The proposed funding in Sanford's budget would, in part, pay for the group to hire an executive director and administrative assistant. Sanford also included about \$81,000 time for equipment.

"We are not the only ones to have thought about hydrogen at all," said David Bodde, Clemson's innovation and public policy director at ICAR. "This is a world-wide race to put the technology in place to found the hydrogen economy. And we are one of the strong contenders in that competition. But we've got to win it."

California, Ohio and New York, among other states, have invested millions into various hydrogen initiatives.

Sanford spokesman Joel Sawyer called the governor's recommendations "a first step."

A hydrogen economy brings with it a list of problems yet to be solved. Current research focuses on hydrogen generation, for instance, and hydrogen storage.

ICAR's role will be to move that research from the labs to the marketplace, Przirembel said.

About \$209 million has gone into that project, with about one-quarter of those funds coming from BMW and \$25 million from the state.

Przirembel predicts the center's 250 acres will be fully populated in 15 to 20 years.

In the meantime, the Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Alliance will work to get the word out about South Carolina, Chairman Fred Humes said.

"All of the answers, and all of the good things that we're going to do are not known yet," he said. "But what we do know is that within the state -- from ICAR all the way down to S.C. State -- is that we have the ability to meet the needs not only of the automotive industry, but also stationary requirements.

"And we're going to make the nation and the world know about it."

Jason Spencer can be reached at 562-7214, or [jason.spencer@shj.com](mailto:jason.spencer@shj.com).

Students outsourcing computer programming to pass classes

By LEE GOMES

The Wall Street Journal

That a student who freely admits to a fondness for nightlife is also behind in his studies won't come as a surprise. And it certainly isn't news that students have been partying their way to bad grades since As and Fs were invented.

But what the computer-programming student who goes by the handle "Lover Of Nightlife" did last month, as the fall semester raced to a close, could only have happened in the age of the Internet: He went online to outsource his predicament.

"This is homework I did not have time to study for," he said in a message on a Web site devoted to outsourcing computer projects. "I need you guys to help me."

Attached was a take-home final exam for a computer class that Mr. Nightlife Lover wanted to pay someone else -- presumably, someone from a place where people can't afford a lot of night life to begin with -- to take for him.

This bit of commerce took place on Rentacoder.com, a Web site that has been mentioned before in this column as an example of globalization in all its blood-curdling efficiency.

Rent A Coder enables people -- usually Americans -- who need computer programs to put them out to bid -- usually for cut-throat prices by Indians and Eastern Europeans.

But if U.S. companies can go online to outsource their programming, why can't U.S. computer students outsource their homework -- which, after all, often involves writing sample programs? Scruples aside, no reason at all. Search for "homework" in the data base of Rent A Coder projects, and you get 1,000 hits.

Indeed, some programming students appear to be outsourcing their way through college. "Pascal Rookie," from Colorado Springs, Colo., has put five school projects to bid.

And while he may be a plagiarist, at least he treats his helpers well: Mr. Rookie has received the highest marks possible for a buyer in the eBay-like rating system used by Rent A Coder. "A pleasure to work with him," said one.

You can't tell from the site how much was paid for the help, but usually it's well less than \$100.

The outsourcing of computer programming homework is a subset of a much bigger problem of Web-related college cheating: online term papers. It is as easy these days to buy 10 pages about the causes of the Civil War as it is to buy a song on iTunes.

The Web plagiarism problem is such that several companies, such as TurnItIn and Ithenticate, have been formed to combat it.

(Note that there is a separate and entirely legitimate business involving online tutoring. This often happens on Web sites that link up students and tutors for one-on-one sessions using instant messenger-like tools.)

Just as with eBay, you often can't get a lot of information about who is doing all the buying and selling on Rent A Coder, beyond what they choose to say about themselves. Sometimes, though, information leaks out -- especially in the attachments that are often included as part of homework-

help requests.

For example, a trivial amount of Web sleuthing was required to trace one posting to an advanced programming class at the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Yes, sighed David Nassimi, who teaches the class, there was an epidemic of plagiarism last semester, and some, but not all of it, was traced back to Rent A Coder. The dean of students got involved, he said, and punishments were meted out; beyond that, Prof. Nassimi didn't want to get into too many details.

He did say, though, that schools are becoming aware of the practice and are beginning to monitor the outsourcing sites for transgressors.

Rent A Coder's Ian Ippolito said that homework is a small part of the site, and that it has tried but failed to curb the practice before. It once required anyone asking for school help to say they were just looking for "tutoring" -- which everyone promptly swore they were doing.

As for the ethics of facilitating these sorts of interactions, Mr. Ippolito said, "When someone does something like that, they are only hurting themselves."

Coming as I do from a long-ago era when elaborate stories were required to explain academic underachievement -- tragic passings of beloved relatives; life-and-death emergencies involving close friends -- I was struck by how today's cheaters often don't even bother to invent an excuse.

"This is a fairly simple program," wrote "Goradia" of Sammamish, Wash. "It is my homework, but since I am busy, I want someone to do this for me."

Take solace, Goradia: With an attitude like that, combined with a programming marketplace like today's, after college, you'll never be busy again.

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