

## Superprotonic Charges Up \$16.2M

### ***Fuel cell materials company gets cash to build.***

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By **Adena DeMonte**

Superprotonic swallowed \$16.2 million in funding Thursday, energizing the fuel cells material company with the cash to build its first factory.

Fuel cells generate electricity by causing chemical reactions using fuel, such as hydrogen or ethanol, and an oxidant, such as oxygen or chlorine. Fuel cells can be used to power portable electronics, transportation, and provide backup energy. Hyped for 40 years now as the next big thing for energy storage, fuel cell technology has been dogged by cost and safety issues.

Pasadena, California-based Superprotonic mostly avoids using higher-cost platinum or other expensive materials such as ceramics, seen as an industry hurdle.

"With our technology we think we will break the barriers on the cost side and the durability side," said Superprotonic CEO Thomas Jahn.

Superprotonic's second round of funding was led by US Venture Partners and included Dow Venture Capital and previous investors CMEA Ventures, Nth Power Technologies, Hydro Technology Ventures, Battelle Ventures, Innovation Valley Partners, and OnPoint Technologies.

The primary concern in fuel cells is using highly flammable hydrogen gas to create the power source. While Superprotonic's fuel cell material can work with hydrogen, it can also use alcohol-based fuels such as ethanol, which Mr. Jahn says are safer than hydrogen.

"No one else is starting with a white board and redefining what a fuel cell should be," said Battelle Ventures partner Tracy Warren.

Superprotonic plans to offer its fuel-cell technology for use in backup power for the military, the telecom industry, and for auxiliary power for trucks.

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