

Fuel cells fan out

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July 13, 2006 7:14 AM PDT

SAN FRANCISCO--When camera operators for KOVR in Sacramento, Calif., and KOKH in Oklahoma City go out on assignment, they take a source of renewable energy courtesy of a small company that describes itself as the world's largest supplier of portable fuel cells.

Folsom, Calif.-based [Jadoo Power Systems](#) poses the question, "How prepared are you to go completely 'off grid'?"

Translation: If the power went out, could you recharge your cell phone in an emergency? Or, could you do your job better if you weren't tied to electrical outlets or hobbled with a case of batteries weighing as much as a 10-year-old boy?

At [Semicon West 2006](#) here, Jadoo's vice president of sales and marketing, Jack Peterson, explained during a discussion of fuel cells and batteries how he believes the future of hydrogen power is now. And it has nothing to do with cars.

The 5-year-old company with just 38 employees makes hydrogen-based fuel-cell power units (priced at \$999) and refillable fuel canisters (priced at \$449 and \$849, depending on size) that replace traditional batteries.

Besides making longer-lasting batteries for broadcasters, Jadoo is also supplying backup power units to the U.S. Special Operations Command as part of Jadoo's beta testing program.



Credit: Jadoo

This camera operator has replaced traditional batteries with hydrogen-based fuel cells.

"Instead of 80 pounds of batteries (that soldiers) have to carry and leave out there during a mission, they can carry 20 pounds of hydrogen solution batteries that can be reused," Peterson said. "Instead, they can carry, oh, I don't know, bullets."

Another application: The Office of Emergency Services in California designates certain fire stations (155 total) as "OES" fire stations. Jadoo has provided its alternative batteries to five such fire stations in Sacramento County that are participating in a beta test of the equipment.