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Major orders placed with Opcon Autorotor

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Immediate delivery for major fuel cell orders placed with Opcon Autorotor

Opcon Autorotor AB, a subsidiary of the listed Opcon Group, has received new orders for air systems from the growing fuel cell industry. The orders are worth around SEK 9 million and have been placed by two of Opcon Autorotor's main customers, world leaders in the development and manufacture of fuel cell engines for vehicles.

"The pace of fuel cell development in the vehicle sector is rising and several large car makers have announced aggressive fuel cell strategies this year. The orders we have received confirm this trend," says Roland Ärlebäck, Managing Director of Opcon Autorotor AB.

Opcon Autorotor AB will start deliveries for the orders this winter and next spring. The orders comprise components for systems that will be fitted into cars driven by fuel cells which are currently being built.

"By following the growth that is currently taking place in the fuel cell sector we will further strengthen our position in this sector," says Roland Ärlebäck.

Fuel cells are the power source for the new generation of vehicles which have the complete absence of hazardous exhaust emissions as their main advantage. A fuel cell converts a fuel, most commonly hydrogen, into electrical energy that can power a vehicle. The only emission is normal water. The technology is already being used in buses providing public transport in city centres. Opcon Autorotor's compressors are used in the fuel cell buses which are now operating in ten European cities, including three buses in Stockholm. Several car makers have announced that they will begin selling cars powered by fuel cells next year. Prototypes have been tested this year, including a Mercedes which was test-driven across the US.

Opcon Autorotor AB has made investments aimed at raising production capacity at the company's plant in Nacka, near Stockholm. The company is thus well equipped to meet increased orders.

"The delivery schedule for the new orders is quite demanding. Together with other assignments and deliveries, which are also increasing strongly, our capacity will be well utilised," says Roland Ärlebäck.

The air system developed and manufactured by Opcon Autorotor AB is a significant part of a fuel cell engine. Opcon Autorotor AB has been delivering compressors for fuel cell projects since 1992 and the company is today the world leader in this field. Since the late 1990s the company has delivered an increasing number of products and systems to the majority of fuel cell systems and vehicles that have been built.

The latest orders received comprise compressors and expanders. Since the autumn of 2002 Opcon has exclusive rights to a high-rev electrical motor recently developed in Sweden, which is a complement to the compressor and expander. Together, these products form the most effective air system available that is specially designed for fuel cells.

The next phase of development for Opcon within the fuel cell sector will be to exploit synergies within the Group and utilise the heat exchangers manufactured by another Opcon subsidiary, Laminova. The operation of a fuel cell entails several processes where temperatures must be controlled and guided. By integrating heat exchangers Opcon will come closer to its strategic goal of supplying complete air systems.

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