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A group of Penn State University researchers looking at ways to use hydrogen as energy were lauded by U.S. Rep. John Peterson, who compared them to discoverers during the oil industry's birth 150 years ago and computer scientists in recent years.

"I think hydrogen has the next potential for changing the world, and the ones who get to it first are going to be out ahead," Peterson, R-Pa., said at Penn State's first Hydrogen Energy Day on Wednesday.

"I want Pennsylvania to be manufacturing fuel cells and all of the things to produce energy for the future," he said.

The Energy Day conference attracted industry, government and academic researchers to check out ongoing university research including hydrogen use, storage and generation.