

NAE Annual Meeting Focuses on Materials

The National Academy of Engineering's annual public symposium this year has chosen the topic of materials research as part of an ongoing theme of exploring "The Changing Nature of Engineering." The all-day symposium was scheduled for early October in Washington, DC at the National Academy of Sciences.

The materials theme was the second in the annual series, following bioengineering last year. It was chosen by academy president William A. Wulf, who wanted to inform and update NAE members on "the role of materials as a key enabling technology in nearly all products."

Wulf and a panel of 10 experts planned to discuss the rapidly expanding potential for design and engineering of new structures and systems as a new array of advanced materials becomes available in many fields, including smart materials and substances. Other areas included semiconductors, photonics, fusion, and the relationship between materials research and biology.

While the theme of the symposium was materials, Wulf said that the meeting was intended primarily for a general audience of scientists and engineers, rather than materials specialists. It was meant to provide low-key briefings, rather than proposals related to funding levels or program authorizations.

"It really is an intellectual discussion," according to Matthew V. Tirrell, head of the Chemical Engineering and Materials Science Department at the University of Minnesota.

During preparation for the conference, Tirrell anticipated that his presentation on emerging interfaces between materials and biology, such as self-assembling and hierarchical structures, would create new opportunities for cooperation among the disciplines present. "Enlightenment is the main objective," he said. "It serves everybody's interest to examine the highlights in the most cogent and persuasive ways possible."

Edgar A. Starke, Jr., with the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at the University of Virginia, described his upcoming talk on high performance structural materials. "We'll try to convey the impact of materials on the ordinary person," he said. "It's an attempt at consciousness-raising." For example, he planned to discuss the use of advanced materials in the development of the next generation supersonic transport aircraft, which is intended to replace NASA's space shuttle and someday provide extremely rapid,

intercontinental passenger service. He also planned to cover new materials for artificial implants, such as replacement hip joints that are longer lasting and more compatible with body tissue than the replacements currently used.

PHIL BERARDELLI

Strawbridge Selected as Project Manager for Spallation Neutron Source

Carl N. Strawbridge has been selected as project manager of the Spallation Neutron Source (SNS) Project at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). The appointment was effective September 1.

Bill R. Appleton, associate director for SNS, said, "Because the SNS Project involves the collaboration of five Department of Energy laboratories, exceptional management skills will be required to maintain cost and schedule and coordinate the various technical aspects of the project. We believe that Mr. Strawbridge brings the training, skills, and experience needed to accomplish this demanding

task. His strong track record in successful cost and schedule management of complex technical systems, such as nuclear submarine construction and repair, is particularly relevant to the needs of the SNS Project."

Strawbridge has 26 years of experience organizing and directing diverse project teams; managing large engineering operations; overseeing construction projects; and managing all site, business, and financial functions of large organizations in both the Navy and the private sector, most recently serving as vice president for quality and information systems at VP Buildings, Inc., in Memphis. He also has skills in strategic planning and information systems.

A native of Baltimore, Strawbridge has a BS degree in economics from the U.S. Naval Academy and MS degrees in both mechanical engineering and Naval architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He completed the Executive Program at the Darden Business School at the University of Virginia. □

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