

Commerce Dept. Receives \$657M Appropriation for FY99

President Clinton has signed into law an appropriations bill for FY 1999 covering key technology partnering and policy programs carried out by the Commerce Department's Technology Administration. The new law includes \$656.6 million funding for the Office of the Under Secretary for Technology, the Office of Technology Policy, the Office of Space Commercialization, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). NIST's programs include the Advanced Technology Program (ATP), the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), and the Baldrige National Quality Program.

Commerce Secretary William M. Daley said, "The Advanced Technology Program co-funds with industry the high-risk research that could have tremendous benefits for the broader economy. Total ATP appropriations are up and we will be able to provide first year funding for about 65 new projects."

The FY 1999 appropriation includes \$2.3 million for US/OTP to expand the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSCoT). Daley said, "EPSCoT will stimulate technology commercialization in eligible states by promoting partnerships between state governments, universities, community colleges, and the private sector—especially states not traditionally receiving significant federal research and development support."

According to the Department of Commerce, FY99 appropriations budget will enable US/OTP to address critical Administration and congressional civilian technology priorities, including \$7.2 million for:

- coordinating the Partnership for a New Generation of Vehicles, a collaboration between the federal government, the auto industry, universities, and suppliers to explore new technologies that will lead to cleaner, more fuel-efficient vehicles;
- OTP's role as the federal government's primary advocate for innovation and industrial competitiveness, analyst of civilian industrial technology issues, and incubator of new models of domestic and international technology cooperation;
- assisting in the development of a new National Space Policy; and
- administering the National Medal of Technology.

The appropriation for NIST is divided into three portions:

- \$280.1 million for efforts under the Scientific and Technical Research Services (STRS) appropriation that includes funding for the NIST Measurement and Stan-

dards Laboratories (\$275.2 million) and the Baldrige National Quality Program (\$4.9 million).

Included in the STRS appropriation for the Measurement and Standards Laboratories is

- \$1.8 million additional funding to provide new measurement tools and services for the semiconductor device, equipment, and materials industries;
- \$2.0 million additional funding to create the comprehensive structure of technical measurements and standards needed for international trade and to promote the global use of U.S. measurement and standards;
- \$4.9 million for the Baldrige National Quality Program that will now include Baldrige awards for performance excellence in healthcare and education; and
- \$310.3 million for technology development and industrial outreach under the Industrial Technology Services (ITS) appropriation that includes (1) \$203.5 million for cost-shared funding to industry for high-risk research and development through ATP (including \$66 million for new awards in FY99); (2) \$106.8 million for increasing the number of widely distributed services and expanded hands-on technical assistance to smaller manufacturers through a nationwide network of centers under MEP; and (3) \$56.7 million for improving NIST's 30- to 45-year-old research facilities.

Wyatt Chairs Research Roundtable

Vanderbilt University Chancellor Joe B. Wyatt has been named chair of the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable sponsored by the Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine, and the National Academy of Engineering. The Roundtable is comprised of 28 distinguished leaders of the U.S. science and technology enterprise who have the mission of facilitating personal working relationships and exchange of ideas about issues, problems, and opportunities facing those charged with developing and deploying science and technology resources. Wyatt accepted the appointment with the goal of using the Roundtable's leadership to spur innovative thinking about the critical role of scientific research in U.S. competitiveness.

Wyatt said, "A strong relationship between government, higher education, and industry is essential if we are to maintain a growing economy and compete in the global marketplace. The pace of scientific and technological change is accelerating at an incredible pace. If the United

States is to maintain a world leadership role, we must have a continuous, candid exchange of fresh ideas among the key players in the federal and state governments, our research universities, and the corporate world. The Roundtable is well positioned to provide the forum for that exchange."

Recent topics addressed by the Roundtable have included the burden of regulatory costs in research; new trends and forces in the science and engineering workforce; and constraints on openness in research communication.

Wyatt was named Chancellor of Vanderbilt University in 1982. His early career focused on computer science and systems, beginning at General Dynamics Corporation in 1956, continuing at Symbiotics International, Inc. and then at the University of Houston and Harvard University. In addition to holding faculty positions, he was associated in various capacities (including President and CEO) with EDUCOM, a consortium of 450 universities that develops computer networks and systems for sharing information and resources. Wyatt serves on the board of directors of Ingram Micro, Reynolds Metals, SONAT Corp., and Aerostructures Corp. During his career, he has carried out research on behalf of the National Science Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Office of Naval Research, and the Eli Lilly Foundation, among others. He holds degrees in mathematics from Texas Christian University and the University of Texas.

NSF Funds Advance Internet Research Projects

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded eight grants worth about \$6 million to support research that will advance the Internet's performance in speed, reliable, flexibility, and confidentiality. The grants, made as part of the Clinton Administration's Next Generation Internet (NGI) initiative, will support research into such problems as how to make the global computer network carry far more information at vastly higher rates of speed than it currently does; how to control "gridlock" on the World Wide Web; and how to create secure "intelligent agents" software tools that could search for information independently and keep what they find confidential. The goal of one research project at the University of California—San Diego, is to develop a prototype network that uses optical fibers to send information at rates as high as one terabit per second. □