

FMS Conference Considers National Materials Policy and Technical Partnerships

Approximately 95 people attended the Federation of Materials Societies' Biennial Conference on "Technical Partnerships: A Road to Commercialization." Chaired by Klaus Zwilsky, former director of the National Materials Advisory Board, the conference aimed at gaining a better understanding of current experiences with partnerships in the United States and at identifying materials policies for consideration. The highlight of this meeting was the quality of the presentations given by speakers who described their personal experiences with partnerships and policies.

Workshop groups addressed specific policy concerns in three broad categories: priority setting, partnerships, and commercialization. The conclusions of each workshop were shared with the larger group on the final day. The conference conclusions and recommendations will be summarized and forwarded to key members of the Administration and Congress within the next few months.

While the majority of speakers and workshop discussions centered on the application of new technology rather than on basic research, frequent mention was made of the United States' strengths and its unique position as a generator of basic research. Mary Good emphasized that the United States also has the most diverse production and manufacturing base in the world, coupled with the strongest entrepreneurial climate. Programs like the Advanced Research Project Agency's Technology Reinvestment Program (TRP) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Advanced Technology Program (ATP) were designed by the current Administration and the Congress to assist in the development of cooperative, collaborative R&D programs that can stimulate the current economy, said Good. Approximately one billion dollars in the current budget plan is devoted just to these two partnership programs.

Vertically structured partnerships among materials companies, universities, and government laboratories pose a particular challenge because they require materials and processing to be one of the contributing, and often enabling, elements. The importance of advanced materials received clear recognition when new lightweight materials for the PNGV (partnership for new generation vehicles) were being defined. Much of the success of this program will center on how well the United States can produce and dem-

Conference on Technical Partnerships: A Road to Commercialization

INVITED SPEAKERS:

- Mary Good, Undersecretary for Technology, U.S. Department of Commerce
- William A. Owczarski, Manager, Washington Office Contract Research, Babcock & Wilcox
- Robert J. Eagan, Director, Engineered Materials & Processes Center, Sandia National Laboratories
- Richard K. Quisenberry, Executive Director, AMTEX
- W.C. Dyer, Executive Director, YSU- Technology Development Corporation
- Peter C. Juliano, Manager, Advanced Technology Projects, GE Corporate R&D
- Carl F. Johnson, Principal Staff Engineer, Ford Motor Company
- Joseph Bordogna, Assistant Director, Engineering, National Science Foundation
- Herbert Lee Buchanan, Director, Technology Reinvestment Project, U.S. Department of Defense
- H. Graham Jones, Executive Director, New York State Science & Technology Foundation
- Egbert D. Maynard Jr., President, EDM Strategies, Inc.
- Harvey L. Eidinoff, Group Manager, Structural Mechanics, Northrop Grumman Corporation
- Christopher T. Hill, Senior Analyst, Critical Technologies Institute
- Linwood Holton, President, Center for Innovative Technology, former Governor of Virginia
- James C. Williams, General Manager, Engineering Materials Technology Laboratories, GE Corporation

onstrate effective, environmentally responsive and recyclable solutions to current high-volume production-ready plastics, composites, and alloys.

The Clinton Administration, it was reported, is planning several new partnerships similar to the PNGV (or CleanCar) initiative, and economic underpinning for the semiconductor industry will be maintained through continued support of SEMATECH. New ventures in electronic packaging and flat panel displays, both requiring new materials and processes for success were described. These new initiatives and others like them are being planned and coordinated through the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC). (See the January 1994 *MRS Bulletin*, p. 9.) Most of the incentives, it was noted, will be directed at shortening the cycle time for new products and at funding development and demonstrations along with the manufacturing science necessary to accomplish these national industrial initiatives.

From the discussion and presentations, it was clear that the Department of Energy's national laboratories have become critically aware of the need to form partnerships (CRADAs, etc.) to advance their technologies and secure their future. It was noted that programs within the Department of Defense and the Department of Commerce have also recently attempted to highlight and provide incentives for partnerships. The National Science Foundation has been trying to build on new industry/universi-

ty models for success without eliminating efforts in existing basic research. State programs have become attuned to partnering concepts, particularly when the partnerships can be established within state boundaries.

One of the most interesting aspects of this conference was seeing how many operating models in the United States already provide examples for future collaborative programs.

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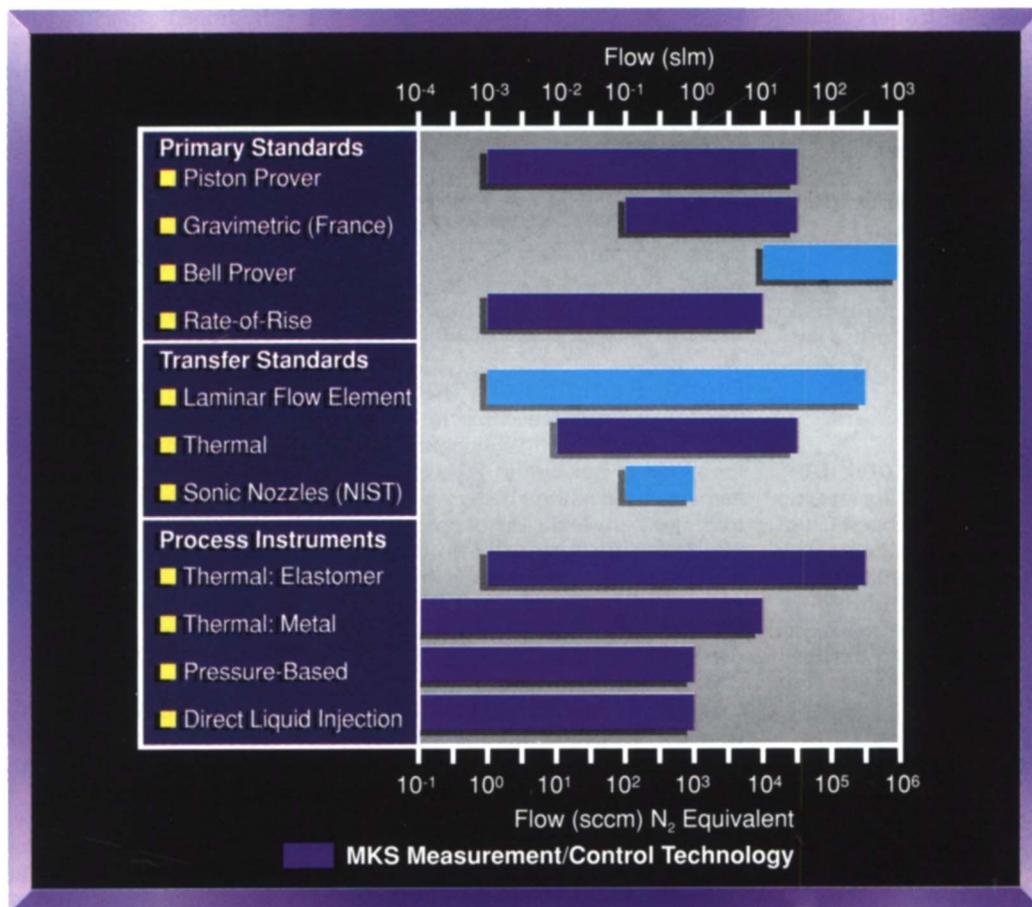
Twinning programs require a two-year commitment beginning in 1995. Funding will be provided to support travel and living expenses for research visits by U.S. grantees to Bulgaria or Romania and for visits by their foreign counterparts to the U.S.

Application Deadline: OCTOBER 14, 1994

For information, contact Kelly Robbins, NRC, 2101 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20418. Phone (202) 334-2644; fax (202) 334-2614; e-mail krobins@nas.edu

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