



In a major address at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center on July 8, 2004, Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham announced that the Department of Energy and its national laboratories were launching an initiative to promote science literacy and help develop the next generation of scientists.

“It is critical that we leverage the resources of this Department – and of all our national labs – to help create a new generation of scientists who will achieve the scientific breakthroughs and technological advances so essential to our future security and prosperity,” Secretary Abraham said. “That is why I am announcing a series of changes in the way the Department of Energy will address the growing and serious problem of science and math literacy in this nation.”

Secretary Abraham went on to outline a seven-part program named STARS: Scientists Teaching and Reaching Students. The program is designed to enhance the training of America’s mathematics and science teachers; boost student achievement in science and math, especially in the critical middle school years; and draw attention to the women and men who have done DOE science so very well – and thereby encourage young people and prospective teachers to pursue careers in math and science.\*

As part of the STARS science education initiative, Secretary Abraham announced that, in the fall of 2004,

DOE will host the first of what we expect to be yearly EXPOs entitled, “What’s Next.” These events will highlight the most exciting new areas of science and technology that are being studied in the U.S., and around the world. The audiences will include scientists, the media and business people, but the emphasis will also be on those target-age groups of students I’ve mentioned.

Our goal is to get Americans, especially young Americans, better acquainted with the wonders of science, and to pique their interest in what makes these wonders possible.

At a minimum, these events would have the same effect as, for instance, an expo of the electronics industry: they will stimulate kids to want to take part in the newest technologies. But we don’t just want to get the next generation of consumers excited. Our aim is to encourage the next generation of creators—the innovators, designers, and engineers of new science and technology.

I believe the “What’s Next” program will be an excellent way to do that.

And so, on October 14, 2004, in the Grand Ballroom of Chicago’s Navy Pier, the Department of Energy will host the inaugural What’s Next expo.

\*For more information about Secretary Abraham’s STARS science education initiative, please visit [http://www.science.doe.gov/Sub/Newsroom/News\\_Releases/DOE-SC/2004/Education-Initiative/Education-Initiative.htm](http://www.science.doe.gov/Sub/Newsroom/News_Releases/DOE-SC/2004/Education-Initiative/Education-Initiative.htm).



**Who:**

Speaking at What's Next will be Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham and Dr. Mark Humayun of the University of Southern California's Doheny Eye Institute, who leads a DOE-funded research team that is developing an artificial retina designed to restore vision to millions of people with blindness caused by retinal disorders.

Attending What's Next will be some 500 seventh- and eighth-graders, their teachers and chaperones from schools in and around Chicago.

**What:**

What's Next will feature a plenary session featuring two speakers, followed by tours of some 40 interactive, instructional and inspiring science and technology exhibits provided by DOE's national laboratories and staffed by their science professionals.

**Where:**

In the Grand Ballroom of Chicago's Navy Pier, at 600 East Grand Avenue.

**How:**

What's Next is hosted by the Department of Energy and its national laboratories, including especially the two labs located in the Chicago area, Argonne National Laboratory and Fermi National Acceleratory Laboratory

**When:**

10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., October 14, 2004

**Why:**

Our nation's future prosperity and security depends on never-ending advances on the frontiers of discovery.

As President Bush has remarked, "The United States has long been a world leader in innovation and technological achievement. Our nation has a rich history of exploration and discovery, marked by scientific advancements that have revolutionized our society. To continue to strengthen our economy, ensure our homeland security, and improve the lives of our citizens, it is essential that America remain on the cutting edge of science and technology."

And as Energy Secretary Abraham has said, "The Department of Energy has a keen interest in encouraging America's youth to study science and pursue careers in the sciences because our national laboratories conduct some of the most sophisticated research and development in the world."