

HOTLINE

The Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory is a United States Department of Energy Facility

Irrepressible Secretary Lauds Lab



Cutting the ribbon to mark the beginning of experimental operations on the National Spherical Torus Experiment at PPPL are, from left, Laboratory Director Rob Goldston, N. Anne Davies, Associate Director for Fusion Energy Sciences at the DOE Office of Science, Representative Rush Holt (NJ-12th), U.S. Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson, Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ-11th), Princeton University President Harold Shapiro, and Princeton Township Mayor Phyllis Marchand.



Physicist Janardhan Manickham asks the Secretary a question during the all-hands meeting in the MBG Auditorium.



Secretary Richardson (holding fluorescent tube) demonstrates how a plasma globe lights a fluorescent bulb to a group of Trenton students. At far left is PPPL Science Education Program Head Diane Carroll and at far right is PPPL Director Rob Goldston.



NSTX Program Director Martin Peng (left) discusses the project with Secretary Richardson (middle) and NSTX Project Director Masayuki Ono (right).

An Irrepressible Day...

On February 26, the mood at the Laboratory was, simply, “irrepressible.”

The staff could not contain its excitement about the visit by U.S. Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson, who was described by one elected official as “irrepressible.” The Secretary came for a ceremony marking the beginning of experimental operations on the National Spherical Torus Experiment (NSTX).

“I want to applaud everyone at this Laboratory for the path-breaking success of the National Spherical Torus Experiment, which through hard work has been brought in ahead of schedule and on budget,” said Secretary Richardson during the NSTX ribbon cutting ceremony in the Test Cell. “It is outstanding research such as this that leads to important breakthroughs.”

Secretary Richardson was assisted in the ribbon cutting by Congressmen Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ-11) and Rush Holt (NJ-12), Associate Director for Fusion Energy Sciences Anne Davies, Princeton University President Harold Shapiro, Princeton Township Mayor Phyllis Marchand, PPPL Director Rob Goldston, NSTX Program Director Martin Peng, and NSTX Project Director Masa Ono.

Music to the Ears

“This new machine is like music to the ears of the appropriations committee — on time and on budget,” said Congressman Frelinghuysen. The Congressman, a strong supporter of PPPL and of fusion research, is on the Appropriations Energy and Water Subcommittee.

Added Congressman Holt, “NSTX is an example of what the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory has to offer...I am proud of the research and teaching taking place at the Lab.” Holt is a former assistant director of PPPL.

Thanking the Congressmen, Secretary Richardson emphasized the importance of bi-partisan support. He also lauded the Laboratory for its accomplishments and stressed the significance of the Department of Energy’s collaboration with Princeton. “I’m committed to this Lab and to the relationship of DOE with Princeton University ...The research at PPPL has the potential to revolutionize the world.”

The visit included a senior staff meeting and overview with community leaders including Plainsboro Township Mayor Peter Cantu, a tour of the L-wing and of the Tokamak Fusion Test Reactor, the NSTX ribbon cutting ceremony, a science education demonstration with students from Trenton’s P.J. Hill Elementary School, and an “all hands” staff meeting in the MBG Auditorium.



Secretary Richardson

Photo by Diemar Krause

Secretary Richardson told the visiting youngsters, “Fusion is the power source of the stars and some day it will be a power source on the earth because of this research, PPPL, and children like you.”

The Secretary drew a packed auditorium during the all hands meeting, in which he addressed staff and responded to questions.

“You’ve had some tough times here. That’s another reason why I’m here — to say ‘thank you,’” he said.

Secretary Richardson also presented a DOE Service Award to Dottie Kerr for 40 years of service at the DOE Princeton Group Office.

Recapping the day, Director Goldston said, “The spirit of the day with Secretary Richardson, Congressman Holt and Congressman Frelinghuysen was ‘irrepressible.’ It certainly made me smile from ear to ear to hear the enthusiasm expressed for fusion and for PPPL by these three key leaders.”

In a note to staff, Goldston added, “I want to thank everyone who helped put together this event for a tremendous effort — both your commitment to the job and your attention to all of the details made this possible. I especially want to thank the NSTX Team who got us to first plasma 10 weeks ahead of schedule, and right on budget. This was a tremendous accomplishment, and one which most certainly impressed the Secretary. This will be the most important point he will remember from his visit here.” ●

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Editor/Writer: Patti Wieser
Photography: Elle Starkman

Graphic Artist: Greg Czechowicz
Layout: Patti Wieser

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