

Quantum jump in Washington communication

Last month (page 97) we reported that The American Physical Society has opened the Office of Public Affairs in Washington under the direction of Robert Park. This new office will function as a two-way communication link between the physics and government communities. The Washington office will keep APS informed about national and international developments that relate to the physics community and, in the opposite direction, the office will respond to requests for physics information from government policymakers. *PHYSICS TODAY* will provide wide dissemination of the information generated by the new office.

The APS initiative could not be more timely. As the new Congress gets underway, we are increasingly aware of the enormity of the need for the science community to work more closely with Washington in helping to order the national priorities and confront the myriad national problems that involve science. The list is staggering: controlling technology transfer to foreign nations; agreeing on missions for our national labs; providing science education for our high-school students; maintaining our leadership in high technology; controlling nuclear proliferation; reversing the decline in PhDs in physics and other sciences; verifying nuclear-arms agreements—these are a small sampling of the issues that require our attention.

Another timely event is the decision by the National Academy of Sciences (prompted by a request from George Keyworth, the President's science advisor) to carry out a physics survey. This study, to be conducted under the leadership of William Brinkman (Bell Laboratories), will generate much valuable information about physics that government agencies and Congressmen need to know. The APS Washington office will undoubtedly play a key role in channeling this information to all the relevant desktops in the capitol.

As it begins its operations in Washington, the APS office can rely on the support of the ex-Congressional Fellow network and on the cooperation and best wishes from other scientific societies already represented or based in Washington, including, among AIP Member or Affiliated Societies, the American Association of Physicists in Medicine, the American Astronomical Society, the American Geophysical Union, the American Institute of Aeronautics & Astronautics and the Optical Society of America. We encourage all members of the physics community, in official capacity or as individuals, to be on the alert for ways to help with this new venture and to join us in extending to the APS Washington office our enthusiastic wishes for success.

Harold L. Davis