

research.

Reagan's promise of \$150 million in Defense money over the next three years arouses fears that civilian superconductivity research may be slighted.

Covering superconductivity

Heaped on a table near the ballroom of the Washington Hilton during the Federal Conference on Commercial Applications of Superconductivity last 28-29 July were stacks of seven different newsletters reporting about developments in the new breed of high- T_c superconductors. The topic is already the source of a booming business in the solicitation and printing of newsletters, even though it has not yet enabled any commercial or military applications.

The newsletters available so far:

► *High- T_c Update*, self-described as a twice-monthly information exchange about ongoing research in the US and abroad, especially in Europe, Japan and China. It contains brief descriptions of experiments, the compounds used and difficulties encountered, along with possible correctives. It announces meetings, providing telephone numbers of contacts, even when overseas, and often summarizes important sessions. The newsletter is a principal source for preprints and reprints of reports and letters appearing in journals and specifies where copies may be obtained. It is published by the Ames Laboratory of Iowa State University and is available from Ellen Feinberg, editor, 12 Physics, Ames Laboratory, Ames, Iowa 50011. An electronic mail version consisting of updated preprint and reprint lists is accessible over MFENET (address FEINBERG at ISU.MFENET) and BITNET (FEINBERG at ALISUVAX), as well as ARPANET and DIALCOM.

► *Inside Energy*, a 10-page weekly that covers virtually everything about energy—including bills in Congress; actions taken by the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Land Management, and the US Geological Survey; and, most recently, developments in superconductivity. The 27 July issue, for instance, examines a Senate bill (S. 7) known as the California Desert Protection Act, which would double the acreage restricted to wilderness and conservation, thereby

Some scientists are worried that DOE and NSF will simply reprogram funds from already hard-pressed existing research into high- T_c superconductivity.

—IRWIN GOODWIN

limiting excavation and exploitation of rare earth elements considered necessary for the new superconducting materials to only one existing operation—a mine run by Molycorp Inc, a subsidiary of Unocal Inc. The publication may be purchased from McGraw-Hill Inc, 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10020.

► *Materials and Processing Report*, a monthly compiled by MIT's Materials Processing Center. Its 4 July issue features a report on last April's hearings on high-temperature superconductivity before the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology. The paper contains informative accounts of high- T_c superconductivity research performed at the Naval Research Laboratory, National Bureau of Standards, MIT, BASF in West Germany and Mitsubishi Metal Corp in Japan. It also presents useful details on patent applications for new materials—though none in this issue relate to high-temperature superconducting compounds. A calendar of materials meetings appears on the back page. The publication is available by subscription from MIT Press Journals, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142.

► *New Technology Week*, which calls itself "the newspaper of superconductors/materials sciences/power electronics/high-energy physics," published by the same people who put out *The Energy Daily* and *Defense Week*. Because the newsletter covers a wide range of subjects, it is not surprising that high-temperature superconductivity gets small play. Still, the paper provides concise and timely accounts of Congressional actions of interest to physicists, mainly those in industrial settings. The 27 July issue examines the newly organized Council on Research and Technology, known more familiarly as Coretech, a Washington lobbying group whose members include some of the largest research companies and universities in the US. Subscrip-

tions may be obtained from King Communications Group Inc, 627 National Press Building, Washington, DC 20045. ► *Superconductivity*, whose charter issue appeared in time for the July conference, a readable and newsy weekly that goes beyond the handouts from members of Congress and research labs by actually interviewing people. As such, it attempts to predict government trends and commercial implications. Among the items in the first issue is an evaluation of the new bill (S. 1480) introduced by Senator Pete V. Domenici of New Mexico that seeks to aid R&D for superconductors, advanced semiconductors and mapping the human genome. It tries to describe projects undertaken by states and universities. The newsletter may be obtained by subscription from Business Publishers Inc, 951 Pershing Drive, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. ► *Superconductivity News*, which made its debut for the Washington meeting and appears directed, according to its own editorial description, at venture capitalists and investment brokers. The first number contains a few plainspoken summaries of research and a calendar of conferences in the US and elsewhere. The newsletter promises to concentrate on examining applications, both real and prospective, evaluating companies and listing stock prices. It does not plan to provide information about research papers, which *High- T_c Update* provides without charge. The newsletter is a monthly purchasable from Superconductivity Publications, Suite 2000, 65 Jackson Drive, Cranford, New Jersey 07016. ► *Superconductor Week*, another weekly that first appeared at the Washington conference. While it covers basic research work in the US and elsewhere, it promises to emphasize government actions, such as grants and contracts for superconductivity R&D, antitrust regulations and bills introduced in Congress. "The Washington conference and the President's initiative made it plain that superconductivity is going to have many consequences for public policy," says the newsletter's editor, C. David Chafee. "Our main mission is to keep readers up to date on policy matters." It is available on subscription from Atlantic Information Services, 1050 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.

—IRWIN GOODWIN

DOD Science Board finds SDI Phase I reasonable but 'sketchy'

The latest contribution to the long-running debate over the feasibility of an operational defense against Soviet

ballistic missiles is a report prepared by a special task force of the Defense Science Board, the Pentagon's senior

scientific advisory group. The report, completed by the panel in late June and immediately stamped "secret,"