

Bush Gives Bement NSF Nod

Arden Bement, a metallurgical engineer who has been doing double duty as head of NIST and acting director of NSF, has been nominated by President Bush to become NSF's director. Bement, 72, is widely respected in Washington and is expected to easily win confirmation by the Senate early next year.

"The foundation has a rich history of strong and independent directors, and I look forward to continuing with that tradition," Bement said in a memo to the NSF staff following his 15 September nomination. "Although NSF faces significant challenges in the near future due to federal budget issues, I am committed to the policies and operations that have stood the test of time and have helped make NSF an extraordinary agency."

Bement stepped in as acting director after NSF director Rita Colwell left in February, several months before her term was to expire (see *PHYSICS TODAY*, June 2004, page 28). The search for Colwell's replacement was made unusually difficult because of the uncertainty caused by the presidential election. Just three days before the legal deadline for nominating a new director, the White House offered the permanent position to Bement. Once he is confirmed, a new di-



President Bush congratulates Arden Bement.

rector for NIST will have to be found.

Representative Vern Ehlers (R-MI), one of two physicists in Congress, said Bement was an "excellent choice" to head NSF, but added that his "departure from NIST is a great loss for the institute." Before coming to NIST in 2001, Bement was the head of the school of nuclear engineering at Purdue University, and prior to that worked at TRW Inc, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Battelle Northwest Laboratories, and General Electric. He was also a professor of nuclear materials at MIT.

Jim Dawson

News Notes

Russia to ratify climate protocol. In a move that surprised and dismayed the Bush administration but delighted the European Union, Russian President Vladimir Putin's cabinet has recommended ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. The protocol aims to cut greenhouse gases that cause global warming. More than 55 countries producing 55% of the industrialized world's 1990 greenhouse gas emissions must ratify the protocol before it can go into effect—and Russia's ratification will tip the scale on emissions. Since 1990, only Russia, Sweden, and the UK have cut emissions to the level specified by the protocol.

In 2001, the Bush administration pulled out of the protocol, arguing that complying would be too expensive and that the protocol unfairly allows developing nations to continue to increase their emissions. Since then, the EU has been wooing Russia, the world's second largest greenhouse gas emitter. In return for ratifying the Kyoto protocol, the EU has hinted it will open its doors to visa-free travel for Russians and will support Russia's entry into the World Trade Organization. Barring any surprises, Russia's parliament was to act on the Putin cabinet's recommendation by ratifying the protocol at the end of October. **PKG**

New nanocenters. NSF will spend \$69 million over the next five years to create six new university-based research centers for nanoscale science and engineering. The new centers are in addition to eight existing centers established with NSF funding since 2001.

Ten federal agencies currently fund nanoscale research as part of the Bush administration's National Nanotechnology Initiative, with NSF alone spending \$250 million on nanoscale research grants in fiscal year 2004. The administration has proposed nearly \$1 billion in nanoscale research funding for FY 2005.

"Each new center has a bold vision for research and education at the fron-

tiers of science and technology, and with the existing centers, provides a coherent approach to US nanotechnology research and education," said Mihail Roco, senior adviser for nanotechnology at NSF and head of the foundation's nanotechnology initiative.

The new NSF centers will be located at the University of California, Berkeley; Stanford University; the University of Wisconsin-Madison;

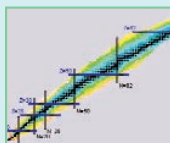
WEB WATCH

<http://cryowwwwebber.gsfc.nasa.gov>

At the **Cryogenics and Fluids Branch** of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, in Greenbelt, Maryland, Brent Warner and his colleagues develop astronomical sensors that work at cryogenic temperatures. The branch's Web page is full of information for working cryogenicists, but it also offers tutorials on low-temperature technology for students and teachers.



<http://www.nndc.bnl.gov/nudat2>



Thanks to **NuDat 2.0**, you can do online searches of the databases held at Brookhaven National Laboratory's National Nuclear Data Center. The software's principal interface is an interactive chart of the nuclides. Clicking on a nuclide brings up information about its nuclear levels, half-life, spin-parity, and so on.

<http://www.ieee-virtual-museum.org>

The History Center of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers created the **IEEE Virtual Museum** to help advance its mission of promoting and preserving the history of information and electrical technologies. The museum holds several online exhibits, including *The Beat Goes On: How Sounds Are Recorded and Played*, and *Powering the Electrical Revolution: Women and Technology*.



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