

production and/or purchase of medical isotopes produced with LEU," says Alan Kuperman, director of the nuclear proliferation prevention program at the University of Texas at Austin. "The days—or at least the years—of HEU-based isotope production are numbered." TF

Obama addresses DOE. President Obama told Department of Energy employees on 5 February that his plan to jolt the US economy back to life will "end the tyranny of oil in our time" and bring about "a revolution in energy efficiency" and a "better, smarter electricity grid" that can "ship wind and solar power from one end of this country to another."

"After decades of dragging our feet, this [stimulus] plan will finally spark the creation of a clean energy industry that will create hundreds of thousands of jobs over the next few years, manufacturing wind turbines and solar cells for example, and millions more after that," he said. "These jobs and these investments will double our capacity to generate renewable energy over the next few years."

Although his visit was brief and no questions were taken, Obama did have one piece of news to share: He had earlier that day signed a presidential memorandum asking DOE to speed up



The Giant Magellan Telescope. (Artist's rendering courtesy of Todd Mason/Mason Productions.)

issuance of energy efficiency standards for many common household appliances. In 2005 a court set deadlines, the last of which is June 2011, for the agency to issue standards on 22 types of household and commercial appliances. Still pending are standards on 15 of those appliance types. Obama said the standards will save consumers money, spur innovation, and over the next 30 years save the amount of energy produced during a 2-year period by all the coal-fired power plants in the US. DK

Korea joins giant telescope. On 6 February, South Korea joined the Giant Magellan Telescope (GMT). The country's Daejeon-based Korea Astronomy and Space Science Institute (KASI) is the

ninth partner and represents the second non-US country in the 25-m optical-IR project spearheaded by the Carnegie Institution for Science.

South Korea will contribute about 10% of the estimated \$700 million total construction cost; so far \$130 million has been committed. One of three huge telescopes in the works globally (see PHYSICS TODAY, September 2008, page 28), the GMT primary mirror will comprise seven 8.4-m-diameter, 20-ton segments. KASI scientists will contribute their expertise in secondary-mirror polishing.

Assuming money is raised, construction is set to start in 2012 and the telescope would see first light at its Las Campanas site in the Andes Mountains of Chile in 2019. TF ■

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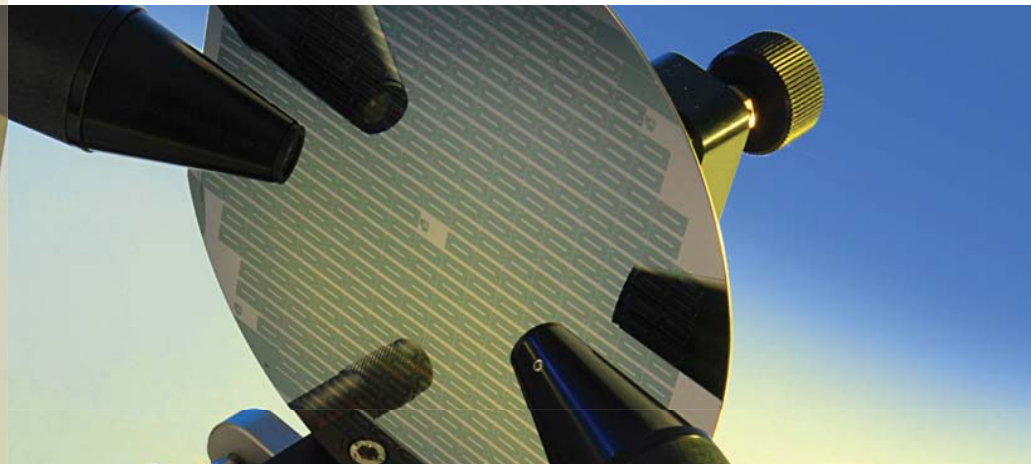
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