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HOTLINE

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

Energy Secretary Bodman Visits PPPL

U.S. Energy Secretary Samuel W. Bodman toured PPPL, addressed staff, and held a press briefing on November 21, describing the Laboratory as "the most advanced center for fusion energy research in the U.S."

His visit to PPPL coincided with the ITER agreement signing in Paris. ITER (Latin for "the way") is a large international fusion experiment aimed at demonstrating the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion energy.

Ministers representing the seven ITER Parties — the European Union, Japan, China, India, South Korea, the Russian Federation, and the U.S. — inked the agreement to build the international fusion energy research project. It will be built in France. "The participating countries represent more than half of the world's population," Secretary Bodman said to media representatives at PPPL's National Spherical Torus Experiment (NSTX) Test Cell.

U.S. Energy Secretary Samuel W. Bodman addresses PPPL staff.

He said PPPL holds a leadership role in the U.S. fusion program, and will have a central role in the ITER project. "There are 17 national labs and one focuses on fusion energy. This is it," Bodman said, adding that staff at PPPL will be very active in ITER.

He also stressed the importance of training and education in math and the physical sciences. "We simply have to have more young people in science and engineering," Secretary Bodman said, further emphasizing the importance of women's involvement in science.

Prior to the briefing, Secretary Bodman toured PPPL's Science Education Laboratory, National Compact Stellarator Experiment (NCSX) Coil Winding Facility, and NSTX. At the Science Education Lab, PPPL Science Education Program Head Andrew Zwicker and three former student interns who are now Princeton University students showed Secretary Bodman the new four-room space housing research labs for students and teachers. Princeton University freshman Emily Margolis, one of the former interns, explained a dusty plasma to the Secretary. A dusty plasma is a hot, ionized gas with particles added to study phenomena related to planetary rings or the tail of a comet.

At the NCSX Coil Winding Facility, physicists Hutch Neilson and Michael Zarnstorff showed Secretary Bodman the innovative coils being built for NCSX, and at NSTX, physicists Masa Ono and Martin Peng led the tour around the spherical torus.

During afternoon remarks to staff, the Secretary said, "Seeing the extraordinary work you do is probably the best part of my job." Secretary Bodman discussed the importance of fusion to the national energy portfolio, the American Competitiveness Initiative and the ITER project.

"This [ITER] is a landmark achievement in international cooperation. It will also set the agenda for work at PPPL," Secretary Bodman said. "The pursuit for ITER has taken tangible shape with the signing of the agreement today. This would not have been done without PPPL."

He spoke of the Laboratory's mission to harness fusion energy and its history full of experiments spawned by seminal ideas. "I have enormous respect for what your predecessors have done and what you have done," the Secretary said.

The Secretary's visit also allowed him to meet an important goal — to visit all 17 of the national laboratories under his command. "Being here today is a special treat for me. This is the seventeenth national laboratory I have visited, and it will complete the cycle," Secretary Bodman said. ●

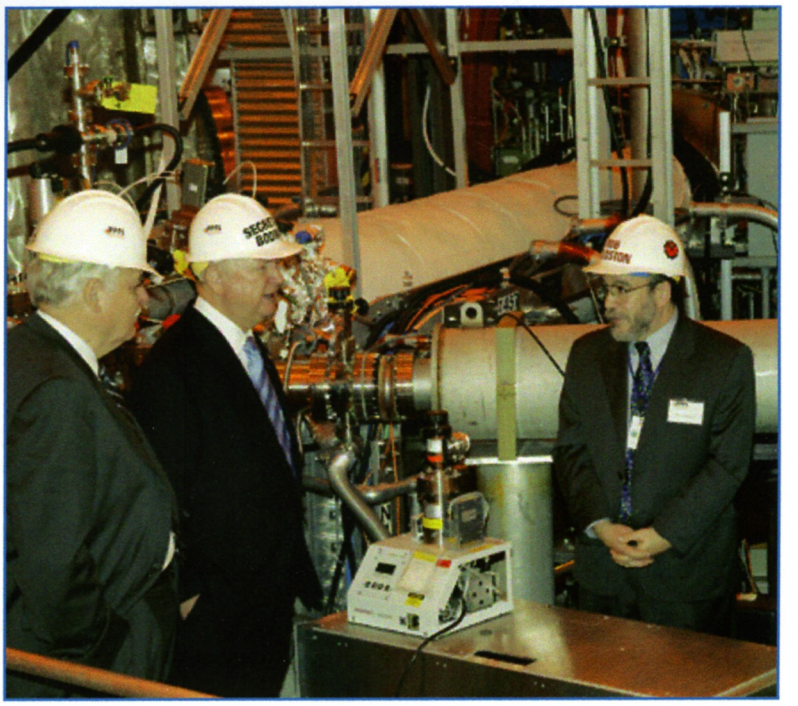
— By Patti Wieser.

PPPL's Masa Ono (middle) shows Energy Secretary Samuel W. Bodman (left) and Plainsboro Township Mayor Peter Cantu the National Spherical Torus Experiment (NSTX).

PPPL's Dave Johnson (left) discusses ITER with Secretary Bodman.

Former PPPL summer research interns Emily Margolis, Laura Berzak, and Jessica Baumgaertel discuss their work with Secretary Bodman during his visit to the Science Education Laboratory. The former interns are now Princeton University students. From left are Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ-11), PPPL Science Education Program Head Andrew Zwicker, Baumgaertel, Margolis, Berzak, and Secretary Bodman.

From left at the National Compact Stellarator Experiment (NCSX) Coil Winding Facility are a visitor, Princeton University's A.J. Stewart Smith, PPPL Director Rob Goldston, PPPL's Hutch Neilson, Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ-11), Secretary Bodman, and PPPL Deputy Director Rich Hawryluk.



Secretary Bodman tours NSTX. From left are Plainsboro Township Mayor Peter Cantu, Secretary Bodman, and PPPL Director Rob Goldston.

— Photos by Elle Starkman. Layout by Greg Czechowicz.