Mason Named Director of Spallation Neutron Source Project

Thom Mason has been named to lead the construction of the $1.4 billion Spallation Neutron Source (SNS) project in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Mason's selection was announced in February by Bill Madia, Director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory. When completed in 2006, the SNS will become the world's center for research for making a variety of materials stronger, lighter, and cheaper.

Madia said, "I have conducted an extensive international search and interviewed numerous highly qualified candidates to lead the SNS project. Among these candidates, Thom brings an unparalleled combination of scientific skills and direct project experience."

Madia said that during his search for the SNS director he found that Mason enjoys the respect of the scientific community, the SNS staff, and the leadership of the Department of Energy.

Mason has worked for the SNS project since 1998 as Director of the project's Experimental Facilities Division. His responsibilities included management of more than $250 million of the project's technical components, research development, and pre-operation portions as well as planning for approximately $150 million of the project's conventional facilities.

Mason has been recognized for his key role in keeping the SNS project on time and on budget. Jim Decker, Acting Director of Science for the Department of Energy, said, "Thom is a superb choice to lead the SNS. He has demonstrated sound management of target and instrument systems. His management skills combine with his focus on the facility's scientific output to ensure strong and continued support by the international community."

Survey Finds Increase in Competitiveness and Productivity among Small Manufacturers Served by NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program

In a survey of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program of clients served between January and September of 1999, 2942 companies around the country reported that, as a result of NIST MEP services, they increased or retained $1.4 billion in sales; realized $364 million in cost savings; invested $576 million in modernization, including plant and equipment, information systems, and workforce and training; and created 5796 jobs and retained 12,357 jobs. Sixty-three percent of the clients responding to the survey reported improvements in productivity and 71% said their company was more competitive as a result of the services. The survey also found that 71% of the MEP clients reported that employee skills had improved and 68% said the work environment for employees had improved as a result of MEP services. Eighty-five percent said they were very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of the services they received and 86% said they would definitely or probably use NIST MEP services again.

The survey was conducted between March and November 2000 by Market Facts Incorporated located in Illinois. MEP has conducted national surveys of its clients since 1996, but this is the most comprehensive survey to date. Only clients that had completed a substantive activity with an MEP center from January through September 1999 were surveyed.

Other independent studies have also shown performance and economic benefits to NIST MEP clients. Researchers at The Center for Economic Studies, U.S. Census Bureau, found that 1559 manufacturing extension clients experienced between 3.4% and 16% more growth in labor productivity over a five-year period than similar non-client firms. This productivity growth translated into $484 million in additional value-added for these MEP clients.

The NIST MEP is a nationwide network of resources assisting smaller manufacturers in becoming more competitive by addressing their most critical and often unique needs. MEP consists of a network of more than 400 manufacturing extension centers and field offices located throughout the United States. Centers represent a blend of federal, state, and local resources. A copy of the survey is available at Web site www.nist.gov/public_affairs/survey.htm or by faxing a request to NIST Public and Business Affairs at 301-926-1630.

Anderson to Head NIST's Electronics and Electrical Engineering Laboratory

William E. Anderson has been named as director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Electronics and Electrical Engineering Laboratory (EEEL). He has served as acting director of EEEL since 1999. EEEL provides the fundamental basis for all electrical measurements in the United States. In close consultation with industry, research and calibration programs are tailored to meet critical measurement needs for the manufacture and operation of electrical and electronic systems, including semiconductor, magnetic, radio-frequency, microwave, optical, optoelectronic, and superconducting equipment; flat-panel displays; electronic instrumentation; and electrical power apparatus and systems. Other programs are working on quantum standards for more accurate fundamental electrical units, measurements critical to the development of advanced technologies such as high-temperature superconductors, and standards for the law enforcement community. □

https://doi.org/10.1557/mrs2001.87 Published online by Cambridge University Press