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WSU's Applied Science Laboratory Receives Federal Funding for Sensor Research

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SPOKANE, Wash. - Recently announced federal funding will support Washington State University research aimed at developing specialized sensors with national security applications. The Institute for Shock Physics' Applied Science Laboratory, located at WSU Spokane, has received two competitive grants from federal agencies totaling \$630,000 for the work.

According to Hergen Eilers, the principal investigator for both grants, the Army Research Office has granted ASL \$330,000 for three years to investigate new materials for optical sensor applications. Optical sensors are needed to detect and identify objects of interest such as missiles. Ideally, a single sensor material could detect visible and infrared wavelength and provide the desired information. The researchers at ASL will synthesize new nanocomposite materials and test their suitability for optical sensor applications.

The second grant, \$300,000 for two years, is provided jointly by the National Science Foundation and the Department of Homeland Security's Domestic Nuclear Detection Office. This project seeks to improve radiation detectors by manipulating their properties at the nanoscale. These detectors are needed to improve the detection capability along our nation's border and to deter terrorists from smuggling radioactive materials into the country. ASL will involve a student from one of Spokane's undergraduate institutions in this project.

The Applied Sciences Laboratory

ASL, the applied research component of ISP, is a multidisciplinary, contract research organization that undertakes a broad range of applied research projects for government agencies and corporations, including the development of commercial applications. Started in 2004 with support from the Office of Naval Research (ONR), ASL emphasizes multidisciplinary scientific and technical activities that are different from, but build on, the ongoing scientific activities in ISP.

Based in Spokane, ASL has experimental facilities co-located at WSU campuses in Spokane and Pullman. It combines the creativity of academic research with the agility and customer focus of private industry. It is funded through a combination of grants, contracts, and private support for the ASL Endowment Fund.

Further information about ASL may be found at www.asl.wsu.edu.

The Institute for Shock Physics

Nearly 50 years of research innovations and activities in understanding the dynamic response of materials at WSU provide the foundation for the research activities in ASL. A multidisciplinary research organization within the College of Sciences, ISP undertakes a broad range of fundamental scientific activities related to understanding condensed matter response under dynamic and static high pressures. Atomic-to-continuum level understanding is the pervading theme of research activities that emphasize integration of innovative experiments with theoretical and computational advances.

Multidisciplinary efforts that combine expertise in physics, materials science, chemistry and mechanical engineering are underway to address several exciting and challenging scientific problems.

Further information about the institute is available at www.shock.wsu.edu.

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