



changing discoveries. DMR has a history of supporting innovative projects, through efforts such as the Materials Research Science and Engineering Cen-

ters, the Materials Institute, and the Materials World Network. However, assessing progress and looking toward the future is always useful, Robertson said.

“The portfolio of research we support must be examined to ensure we are able to invest in these emerging areas in an appropriate and timely manner,” he said. “I believe we do this well now through our discovery of new materials phenomena and new materials, and our advancement of our understanding of fundamental materials processes and properties, but there are always ways to improve and the strategic goals set the challenge.”

The plan highlights a number of other efforts to keep U.S. researchers at the frontiers of science, including a commitment to providing researchers with the

tools and infrastructure they need, encouraging international collaborations, and addressing societal needs through partnerships with other agencies, academia, and the private sector. In addition, education and workforce preparation are key areas of focus.

The plan does not reflect a change in direction for NSF and DMR, said Robertson. “What it does is ask that we think about where we are today, where we would like to be in future, and start charting our course to ensure we accomplish our goals.... I think this is an exciting time to be involved in materials research.”

NSF releases a new strategic plan every five years. *Empowering the Nation through Discovery and Innovation* follows the 2006 plan, *Investing in America's Future*, and is available on the NSF website: www.nsf.gov.

Kendra Redmond

NIST selects first Chief Manufacturing Officer

www.nist.gov

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) announced last month that manufacturing industry executive Michael F. Molnar has been appointed to be the agency's first-ever Chief Manufacturing Officer.

Molnar will be responsible for planning and coordination of the Institute's broad array of manufacturing research and services programs. He will serve as NIST's central point of contact with the White House, the Department of

Commerce, and other agencies on technical and policy issues related to manufacturing.

Molnar has previously served as a federal fellow in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Molnar will begin working at NIST on August 29, 2011.

Japan seeks to expedite commercialization of printed electronics

www.meti.go.jp

Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry announced in late spring the launch of the Japan Advanced Printed Electronics Technology Research Association (JAPER). Located in the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) in Tsukuba, JAPER was founded with the goal of accelerating the commercialization of printed electronics—technology for low-power, low-resource manufacturing of large-area devices (e.g., dis-

plays, sensors, and batteries) and thin-film, flexible devices with enhanced productivity.

JAPER aims to achieve early commercialization of manufacturing technologies for flexible devices and printed devices by conducting the project for the “Development of Fundamental Technologies for Next-Generation Printed Electronic Materials and Processes” (fiscal years 2010–2015) under a commission from the New Energy and Industrial

Technology Development Organization (NEDO).

Specific research subjects at JAPER include promoting more environmentally friendly manufacturing of large-area electronic circuits, increasing the energy efficiency of input/output devices for information terminals, and cultivating markets for products with strong industrial competitiveness. JAPER will also seek to develop technologies to standardize these manufacturing and device technologies. □