

Research support center hits 25 years

Plans announced for partnership with Japan and expansion

By Frank Munger
Thursday, January 24, 2008

OAK RIDGE - Physicists gathered Wednesday at Oak Ridge National Laboratory to celebrate the 25th birthday of a research support center, announce expansion plans, and, of course, discuss new and developing aspects of nuclear science.

The Joint Institute for Heavy Ion Research was founded here in the early 1980s to support the work at ORNL's Holifield accelerator, and some of the institute's founders - such as professors Joe Hamilton of Vanderbilt University and Carroll Bingham and Lee Riedinger of the University of Tennessee - were on hand Wednesday to recount the history and accomplishments.

The joint institute was sponsored by UT, Vanderbilt and ORNL, and it has been a home away from home for physicists from around the country and the world. In addition to providing office and research support, the institute included a small dormitory - where graduate students and others could live on the cheap while tracking studies and nearby experiments at Holifield.

The institute was a first of its kind at Oak Ridge, setting the stage for other state-funded facilities and research collaborations.

Officials announced plans Wednesday for a \$500,000 expansion to the institute, which will host a research partnership between the United States and Japan. It is expected to be open in 2009.

The partnership, known as JUSTIPEN (Japan-U.S. Theory Institute for Physics with Exotic Nuclei), will support studies "with implications in nuclear energy, national security and medicine," UT said in announcing the expansion at Oak Ridge. The expanded work at the Joint Institute for Heavy Ion Research mirrors that of a Japanese facility near Tokyo.

Senior writer Frank Munger may be reached at 865-342-6329.

