

CONTACT: Saralyn Stewart
Cell phone: (512) 694-2320

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 14, 2005

American Physical Society Invites Denver to Discover Plasma

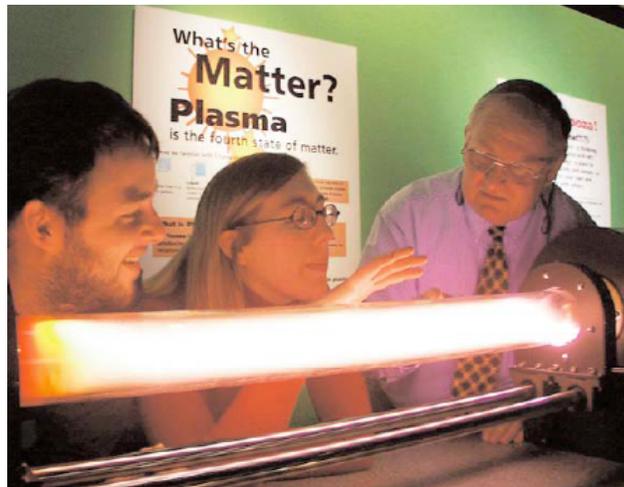
Public invited to “Play with Plasma”

DENVER, Colorado, Oct. 24, 2005 – We live on a planet where we are surrounded mainly by matter in the familiar states of solid, liquid, and gas. But many of us are not aware of a fourth state of matter—plasma. In Denver, that is about to change. During the week of October 24, the American Physical Society - Division of Plasma Physics (APS-DPP), as part of their yearly meeting, has scheduled a series of educational events to encourage teachers, students and the general public to explore plasma.

Until recently plasma was rarely mentioned in high school textbooks, though matter in the plasma state makes up 99% of the visible universe. Our sun, stars, northern lights, solar flares, and lightning bolts are all examples of naturally occurring plasmas. Man-made plasmas are used for lighting (fluorescent lights), sterilizing medical equipment, welding, manufacturing computer chips, fusion energy research, and even surgery.

The main event for the general public will be a special Plasma Sciences Expo, October 27, 6:00 - 8:00 PM at the Colorado Convention Center, geared to introduce the local community to the excitement of plasmas and the benefits of plasma research. It is free-of-charge. Scientists from around the country and the world will be there, ready to engage participants in lively hands-on demonstrations and explorations. Those attending will be able to create arcs of lightning, observe their fluctuating body temperature on a special monitor, manipulate a glowing plasma with magnets, and learn how to confine a plasma by playing a tokamak video game. Students at all levels, teachers, parents and the general public are welcome.

The Expo will also be open during the day on October 27 and 28 for local school field trips. Over 2200 students are scheduled to attend.



Demonstrations of plasma, its mystery, beauty, and power, will be available at the Plasma Sciences Expo, scheduled for local schools on October 27 and 28. The general public is invited to explore the exhibits on Thursday, October 27, from 6 PM to 8 PM.

Local teachers will receive a special day of training on “Teachers Day,” Tuesday, October 25. Over 115 teachers will attend morning and afternoon workshops about plasma and related science. Many will learn how to bring the study of plasma into their classrooms, a valuable skill consistent with national science standards and the Colorado Science Assessment Framework. Education programs will also be visiting local schools. Throughout the week scientists and teachers from General Atomics, the Contemporary Physics Education Program (CPEP), and the University of Wisconsin's “Wonder of Physics” program, among others, will be in the area, presenting hands-on science experiences to local students.

Contributing laboratories, industries, academic institutions, and government agencies include: General Atomics; University of Denver; Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory; Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory; Plasma Science and Fusion Center, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Oak Ridge National Laboratory; Oak Ridge Institute for Science Education; Denver Museum of Nature and Science; Contemporary Physics Education Project (CPEP); Space Science Institute; University of Texas at Austin; U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Fusion Energy Sciences, U.S. Department of Energy Defense programs, and more.

Contacts

Rick Lee, APS/DPP Education Outreach Chair, (858) 455-3331, Rick.Lee@gat.com

Carol Danielson, 2005 Chair, (858) 455-3474, Carol.Danielson@gat.com

Linda Norman, Registration Coordinator, Teachers Day and Expo, (703) 599-6170, Linda@donnormanassociates.com

Further information

http://fusioned.gat.com/plasma_sciexpo.html