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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Office of Science Financial Assistance Program Notice DE-FG01-03ER03-21; Department of Energy Experimental Program To Stimulate Competitive Research (DOE/EPSCoR) Implementation Awards

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice inviting research applications.

SUMMARY: The Office of Basic Energy Sciences (BES) of the Office of Science (SC), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), in keeping with its energy-related mission to assist in strengthening the Nation's scientific research enterprise through the support of science, engineering, and mathematics, announces its interest in receiving applications from eligible States for the support of the DOE/EPSCoR Program. The purpose of the DOE/EPSCoR Program is to enhance the capabilities of designated States to conduct nationally-competitive energy-related research and to develop science and engineering human resources in energy-related areas to meet current and future needs.

DATES: The deadline for receipt of formal applications is 4:30 p.m. E.S.T., September 23, 2003, in order to be accepted for merit review and to permit timely consideration for award in Fiscal Year 2004. No application will be accepted after this deadline.

ADDRESSES: Formal applications referencing Program Notice DE-FG01-03ER03-21 must be sent electronically by an authorized institutional business official through DOE's Industry Interactive Procurement System (IIPS) at: <http://e-center.doe.gov> (see also <http://www.sc.doe.gov/production/grants/grants.html>). IIPS provides for the posting of solicitations and receipt of applications in a paperless environment via the Internet. In order to submit applications through IIPS your business official will need to register at the IIPS Web site. The Office of Science will include attachments as part of this notice that provide the appropriate forms in PDF fillable format that are to be submitted through IIPS. IIPS offers the option of using multiple files—please limit submissions to one volume and one file if possible, with a maximum of no more than four files. Color images should be submitted in

IIPS as a separate file in PDF format and identified as such. These images should be kept to a minimum due to the limitations of reproducing them. They should be numbered and referred to in the body of the technical scientific application as Color image 1, Color image 2, etc. Questions regarding the operation of IIPS may be E-mailed to the IIPS Help Desk at:

HelpDesk@pr.doe.gov, or you may call the help desk at: (800) 683-0751. Further information on the use of IIPS by the Office of Science is available at: <http://www.sc.doe.gov/production/grants/grants.html>.

If you are unable to submit the application through IIPS, please contact the Grants and Contracts Division, Office of Science at: (301) 903-5212, in order to gain assistance for submission through IIPS or to receive special approval and instruction on how to submit printed applications.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Matesh N. Varma, DOE/EPSCoR Program Manager, Division of Materials Sciences and Engineering, SC-132, Germantown Building, Office of Science, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585-1290. Telephone: (301) 903-3209; Fax: (301) 903-9513; E-Mail: matesh.varma@science.doe.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: To continue to enhance the competitiveness of states and territories identified for participation in the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) by the National Science Foundation (NSF), DOE has decided to again restrict eligibility to the following states and territory: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. An appropriate fiscal agent, acting on behalf of a state's EPSCoR Committee, may submit only two applications in response to this program notice. Each application is restricted to one research "cluster." A cluster is defined as a group of scientists working on a common scientific theme. It is the DOE/EPSCoR program policy to limit the Research Implementation Awards to one active award per state. Therefore, only those EPSCoR states that have: (1) Not received a previous DOE/EPSCoR Research Implementation Awards, (2) "graduated" their previously supported Research Implementation Awards research clusters or (3) received final

funding for their Research Implementation Awards in Fiscal Year 2003, are eligible to apply for Fiscal Year 2004 funding. Thus, only the following states are eligible to apply under this notice: Alaska, Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Awards issued under this Notice will provide funding for basic research, its coordination, and development of human resources in the state. The DOE/EPSCoR Research Implementation Awards should be used to improve the academic research infrastructure of key science and technology areas identified by the state's EPSCoR governing committee as critical to the development of state and institutional research and development capability. The state's strategy to develop and utilize the scientific and technological resources that reside in its research universities should be described in its DOE/EPSCoR Research Implementation Awards application. In preparation for submitting an application, the EPSCoR governing committee within each state is expected to have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for development of its research institutions in support of overall state research and development objectives. Successful infrastructure improvement plans are likely to be those which are focused on one energy-related research area and which candidly represent the opportunities for enhanced academic R&D competitiveness, including the acquisition of sustained non-EPSCoR support. Most important, the state's infrastructure improvement strategy must have a high probability of realizing stated goals and objectives as judged by members of a DOE merit review panel. In all instances, performance milestones and a timetable for achieving such milestones are prerequisites for EPSCoR support. Priority will be given to applications that propose to develop new competitive research areas rather than those that propose to enhance or continue research areas that are already competitive. The DOE/EPSCoR Research Implementation Awards are not appropriate mechanisms to provide support for individual faculty science and technology research projects.

Program Funding

Subject to Congressional authorization and approval of funds in Fiscal Year 2004 DOE anticipates an estimated \$1.0 million will be available for awards to fund collaborative research and human resource development in energy-related science