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PRESIDENT BUSH BROADENS PCAST'S DUTIES
-- Order Elevates Role of External IT Advice in the White House --

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On September 30, President Bush signed an Executive Order designating the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) as the advisory panel that will be responsible for overseeing the Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD) Program. The President also ordered that the PCAST's membership be increased, so more members with relevant experience can be appointed to buttress PCAST's Information Technology (IT) assessment functions. The President is expected to make these new appointments in the near future.

The duties that the PCAST will assume as the President's advisory committee on IT include providing an independent assessment of progress made in implementing the NITRD Program and whether the research and development undertaken within the NITRD Program is helping to maintain United States leadership in information technologies and their applications

PCAST, the President's premier advisory board in the science and technology (S&T) arena, is co-Chaired by Dr. John H. Marburger, III, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and venture capitalist E. Floyd Kvamme. PCAST's members consist of top-level managers (*e.g.*, corporate CEOs, university Presidents) drawn from industry, education and research institutions, and other nongovernmental organizations. PCAST has a history of issuing definitive reports on the important topic of maintaining the Nation's S&T innovation leadership.

Speaking about this new role for the PCAST, Dr. Marburger said, "I'm pleased that the PCAST will be assuming the responsibility of providing the Administration with high-level external advice on information technology. The President's Order reflects the vital role that IT research and development plays in the Nation's innovation leadership. It also reflects the President's confidence in PCAST's ability to assess large multi-agency programs on vital S&T issues, and to provide top-notch advice relevant to the Administration management of such programs. PCAST's outstanding assessment of the National Nanotechnology Initiative provides a strong foundation for its undertaking a similar activity with information technology."

(The PCAST is also designated as the National Nanotechnology Advisory Panel (NNAP), advising the President on the National Nanotechnology Initiative, a large multi-agency research program.)

Mr. Kvamme echoed Dr. Marburger's remarks, saying "The PCAST is looking forward to the challenge of advising the President on the NITRD Program, another important complex multi-agency initiative. Advances in information technology have had an important role in contributing to the current economic vitality of the Nation, advances that were underpinned by both Federal and industry R&D."

For its NNAP work, the PCAST formed a nanotechnology "technical advisory group," comprising about 50 top government and private sector nanotechnology scientists. This "TAG" proved highly beneficial to PCAST's NNI assessment activities, and PCAST intends to form a similar TAG resource in the IT arena.

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