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NETL NEWS

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NETL Researcher Honored with 2013 Federal Laboratory Award

Morgantown, W.Va. — Dr. Stephen E. Zitney of the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) has been awarded a Mid-Atlantic region Federal Laboratory Consortium (FLC) award for Excellence in Technology Transfer for his work on the [3D Virtual Energy Plant Simulator and Immersive Training System](#).

The 3D Virtual Energy Plant Simulator and Immersive Training System (ITS) deployed at NETL's Advanced Virtual Energy Simulation Training and Research (AVESTAR[®]) Center delivers the first virtual energy plant for training, research, and development. NETL and its training partners are using the system to deliver realistic, cost-effective, and low-risk workforce training to the energy industries. Virtual reality-based training helps operators increase their process knowledge and confidence, so they can bring plants online faster, reduce shutdowns and downtime, and reduce the risk and cost of equipment damage. The 3D virtual energy plant simulator is available to third parties for internal training purposes at their campuses.

Several partners are working with NETL to make the system available to a wider audience. NETL has agreements with West Virginia University for engineering students and researchers and with Pierpont Community & Technical College for students enrolled in their power plant certificate program which is sponsored by FirstEnergy Corporation. NETL is also transferring the technology to its Regional University Alliance (RUA) partners, which include five regional universities. A license agreement is being negotiated between NETL and Invensys Operations Management which would allow Invensys to market and sell the NETL technology as a generic virtual energy plant simulator and to use it as the basis for developing customized, plant-specific ITS solutions for the energy industry, academia, and national laboratories.

The FLC—a nationwide network of federal laboratories—selected three NETL technologies to receive regional awards for excellence in technology development or transfer. These yearly awards, presented by several regional divisions of the FLC, support the efforts of its members and potential partners to transfer their technologies to the marketplace as assets to the national economy and benefits to society.

Dr. Zitney is Director of NETL's AVESTAR Center and is leading efforts to accelerate the progress toward achieving operational excellence for the nation's energy systems, from smart power plants to smart grid. He grew up in West Mifflin, PA and earned M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in chemical engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a B.S. degree in chemical engineering and engineering and public policy from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Dr. Zitney is a resident of Morgantown, WV.

NETL is a U.S. Department of Energy national laboratory that produces technological solutions to America's energy challenges. For more than 100 years, the laboratory has focused on developing tools and processes to provide clean, reliable, and affordable energy to the American people. Three NETL research sites—Albany, Ore., Morgantown, W.Va., and Pittsburgh, Pa.—conduct a broad range of energy and environmental research and development activities that support DOE's mission to advance the national, economic, and energy security of the United States.

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