

About NCAR

Now & Then

National and international research leaders from government, industry and academia will meet in **Savannah, Georgia, on October 22-24, 2008** to discuss and address issues on water conservation, policy, and research solutions. This important, high-level meeting is being hosted by the Georgia Tech Savannah Campus. This gathering marks the 61st anniversary of the National Conference on the Advancement of Research (NCAR).

The nature of the NCAR meeting attracts senior leaders from the R&D enterprise in the United States as well as abroad. They include vice presidents of research, major laboratory directors, policymakers, and other persons who have the power to shape the direction and performance of our nation's research enterprise. Since 1947, NCAR has developed a character based on four main features: informality, talks by eminent speakers, interactive discussions including group sessions, and balanced representation from industry, academia, government, and non-profit organizations.

The conference will showcase top speakers from government, industry, academia, and international partners. A pre-meeting social will kick off the event on the evening of Wednesday, October 22. The conference begins in earnest on Thursday morning. A noted keynote speaker will set the stage for each of the three focus areas: The Cycles of Water, The Business of Water, and The Future of Water. These will be followed by panels featuring national and international representatives from non-profits, universities, industries, and government agencies.

Another feature of NCAR conferences is the prestigious Eric Walker lecture delivered during each event. The lecture is named in honor of one of the founder's of NCAR and provides an opportunity for a visionary lecturer to contribute to the conference by discussing future challenges and opportunities in an area of global importance.

A Glance into NCAR's History

The National Conference on the Advancement of Research (NCAR) grew out of experiences during and immediately following World War II, when government interest and money transformed the scientific and research communities of the United States. Wartime agencies, the National Defense Research Committee (NDRC) and its successor, the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD), created many new laboratories and research organizations, drawing numerous academics into the government/defense community. The success of significant war-related research projects convinced many in the government and much of the public of the benefits produced by research and development (R&D), and therefore, the need for continuing large-scale scientific efforts.

After the war, research efforts continued, and the R&D community searched for structures and processes that would produce effective management of resources and personnel. During wartime, managers and administrators working in Boston-area laboratories held meetings to discuss problems encountered at labs such as the Radio Research Lab, the Harvard Underwater Sound Lab, and various labs at the Massachusetts Institute of

Technology. As the United States settled back into times of peace, several in the group sought a way to continue sharing with and learning from others, and they planned a conference to be held at Pennsylvania State College.

In October 1947, 170 men attended the historic Conference on Administration of Research. Speakers from Bell Telephone Laboratories, Brookhaven National Laboratories, and Gulf Research and Development Company were just a few of the prestigious representatives in attendance. The first conference set the tone and character for succeeding meetings, annual events that came to be called the National Conference on the Advancement of Research, or NCAR.

NCAR, one participant said, *"was a unique opportunity for people to go listen to people who had obviously been successful."* The early NCARs established standards that are still evident today. NCAR provides members of four sectors - government, industry, academia, and nonprofit - with an arena in which to learn about managing research activities while at the same time meeting the people who know what work is being done as well as how to make it come to fruition.

Eric Walker, one of NCAR's founding fathers, put it best: NCAR is *"a platform at which people from government, industry, and universities could discuss common problems and cooperatively assist in their solution."*

Information on this page was taken from the publication, NCAR 50th Year