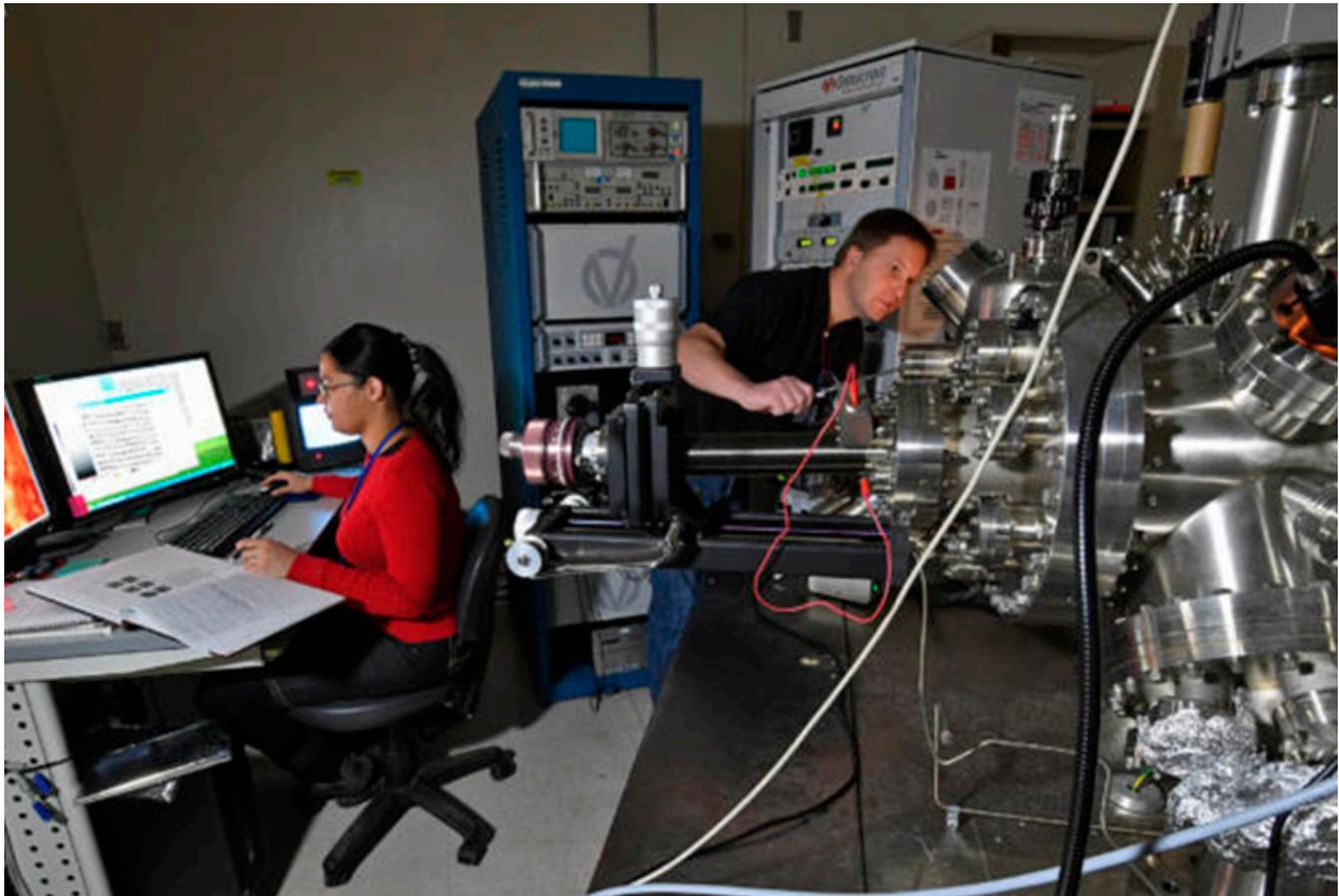




Los Alamos scientists engage industry at DisrupTECH

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LOS ALAMOS — New, cutting-edge technologies from Los Alamos National Laboratory got their first public hearing on potential market applications at the Lab’s third annual DisrupTECH conference on Thursday.

Lab scientists unveiled nearly a dozen inventions to about 100 investors, businesspeople and technology transfer professionals from around New Mexico and elsewhere at the event, organized in partnership with the New Mexico Angels investor group.

They included things like novel “vacuum balloons” as potentially cheaper and more reliable replacements for helium balloons, a new emergency situational awareness system to immediately determine potential public impact from chemical accidents, and an advanced simulation technology to accurately model the flow of underground fluids, which oil and gas producers could use to make better decisions on hydraulic fracturing.

“The past two annual conferences have allowed companies and entrepreneurs to hear directly from key scientists about these technologies and consider ways to commercialize them,” said

Angels President John Chavez. “We expect new partnerships to emerge again from this year’s conference.”

The Angels partnered with the lab to create DisrupTECH in 2015 as part of the investor group’s statewide effort to pull new technologies out of New Mexico’s universities and national labs.

For Los Alamos, the event shines a public spotlight on lab innovation, while allowing scientists to directly engage with business people. That’s often a new experience for scientists accustomed to interacting with other scientists and academics, said Mariann Johnston, spokeswoman for the Richard P. Feynman Center for Innovation, which manages the laboratories tech-transfer activities.

“Scientists are good at academic presentations, but they often lack the skill sets for business presentations to fully explain technology to investors and entrepreneurs,” Johnston said.

The Feynman Center, in partnership with the Angels, provides months of mentoring and coaching to prepare scientists to hone their presentations into business pitches, Feynman Director David Pesiri said.

“It’s training and exposure for our creative technology minds to become more comfortable with packaging and pitching outside of the technology community,” Pesiri said. “We want to make ourselves more compelling to potential research partners and industry sponsors.”

This year’s event included presentations by six Los Alamos postdoc interns through a new Feynman program to engage and train them in tech-transfer activities.

“I learned how to not talk like a scientist,” Los Alamos post-doc Ben Stein told the audience at the start of his presentation. “It’s harder than it sounds.”

Apart from training, most scientists hope to find entrepreneurial partners to help move their technologies forward.

Miles Beaux, who helped develop the labs “vacuum balloon,” said he’s seeking Angel investors or industry partners to help with a first commercial prototype of the technology, which could provide hovering WiFi hotspots to bring Internet service to under-served communities.

“We want to build our first air-buoyant prototype, but that’s outside the scope of lab funding,” Beaux said.

For more information see [Albuquerque Journal](#)

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