ECE Highlights - News of Note

Ajeet Rohatgi to Receive Prestigious Cherry Award

Ajeet Rohatgi, director of UCEP and recipient of the 2003 William R. Cherry Award. *Photo by Gary Meek*

Ajeet Rohatgi has been named the recipient of the 2003 William R. Cherry Award. He will receive the award on May 14, 2003 at the 3rd World Conference on Photovoltaics in Osaka, Japan.

Named in honor of William R. Cherry, a founder of the photovoltaic (PV) community, this award is the highest honor in the area of photovoltaics presented by the IEEE Photovoltaic Specialists Conference in recognition of those who have made outstanding and sustained contributions to the advancement of photovoltaic science and technology.

"It is indeed a great honor to be in such a select group of photovoltaics pioneers–many of whom I have known and admired for a long time," Dr. Rohatgi said. "I feel very fortunate to have worked with some of the most talented faculty members and highly motivated students and engineers who have played a major role in my own accomplishments."

Dr. Rohatgi is a Regents' Professor and a Georgia Power Distinguished Professor and leads the University Center of Excellence for Photovoltaic Research and Education (UCEP), one of the largest solar power research centers in the U.S. UCEP labs house facilities for materials characterization, solar cell modeling, process development and cell fabrication, and solar cell testing.

During the last 10 years, Dr. Rohatgi and researchers in the Center have established numerous world records for low-cost, high efficiency cells on promising low-cost silicon materials. They have also pioneered the field of rapid thermal processing of silicon solar cells and have developed a number of cost-effective and high-throughput technologies that enhance material quality and solar cell performance. In addition to Dr. Rohatgi, Associate Professors Miroslav M. Begovic and Christiana B. Honsberg, five research professionals, and 10 Ph.D. students are involved in the Center.

UCEP is also home to the 342 kW rooftop, grid-connected PV system at the Georgia Tech Aquatic Center, which also serves as a test bed for large-scale PV arrays. The solar-powered system provides about 30 percent of the electrical energy needed for the Aquatic Center and saves Georgia Tech almost $30,000 a year in energy bills. Dr. Rohatgi also expressed his appreciation to the Georgia Tech administration, the U.S. Department of Energy, and Georgia Power for their long-term interest and commitment to developing UCEP into the success that it is today.

"This award is a tribute to our faculty, staff, students, industrial and governmental collaborators, and the Georgia Tech leadership," he said. "I hope that the PV research at Georgia Tech will maintain its leadership role in the future and will have a significant impact in making solar electricity a clean and cost-effective energy option in the very near future."