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Exhibition, award ceremony and open-air event Success story: Fraunhofer celebrates 25 years of applied research in the new federal states of Germany

No research organization has made its contribution to German reunification as quickly and intensively as has the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. For more than a quarter of a century, Fraunhofer has been an innovative research partner, a future-oriented employer as well as a technological, economic and social impetus in the new federal states. Fraunhofer is honoring and celebrating this anniversary, the unique history of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft in the new federal states as well as the achievements of its institutes and institutions with special events.

For 25 years now, Fraunhofer has been an established engine of progress in the federal states of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and Berlin. No other research organization was so quickly and supportively present on site in the period of political and social upheaval in East Germany in 1989/1990. It was necessary to quickly give scientists new perspectives in a decaying research landscape. Even under the changed conditions, these researchers wanted to continue to demonstrate their performance. With more than 20 research facilities, an extraordinary success story for Fraunhofer in the new federal states began on January 01, 1992.

Within a few years, the local Fraunhofer institutions accomplished what eluded the economy for many years – reaching the level of West Germany and the international competition. This has resulted in efficient centers of competence which are both scientifically and economically successful as bearers of hope for the regional upswing. "Twenty seven years ago, we celebrated the political reunification of the two German states, and twentyfive years ago, Fraunhofer was officially active in the new federal states – with quite an exceptional commitment," says Prof. Reimund Neugebauer, President of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. "Hardly anyone was so fast and efficient at the time in adjusting their field of influence and even their own structure to the reunited Germany as was Fraunhofer. And this commitment was also necessary, because the economy in the new federal states – and, therefore, the customer group for applied research – suffered a rapid decline in the first few years. We therefore had to make the Fraunhofer research in the East competitive more quickly so that it could also find customers in the West."

Editorial Notes

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Successful cooperation between East and West

Between 1990 and 2016, Fraunhofer invested around 590 million euros in the construction works measures of research facilities in the new federal states; in addition, around 490 million euros went into initial equipment. Fraunhofer's history there began twenty-five years ago with 21 institutes and posts; now, there are more than 50 research institutes in the new federal states and Berlin. In this period, the number of employees in the new federal states rose from 970 to 4,380 and the budget grew from (a converted) 70 to 504 million. The profit share from the economy in 2016 averaged 40 percent. "As a result, we have efficiently and successfully linked the worlds of applied research in East and West," says Neugebauer. "Our core idea was to bring the people who had lived in different systems for so long together again, especially in everyday life and the working world. They had to be given the space to get to know each other and to appreciate each other – and to be enabled to grow through joint performance." The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft and its institutes are celebrating the 25th anniversary of applied research in the new federal states with special events in the Saxon state capital of Dresden, where Fraunhofer has a particularly strong representation with 11 research facilities – nearly 2,000 employees there generate a total budget of 167 million euros.

Exhibit #real_digital: Creating values together

The diverse and interactive anniversary exhibition "#real_digital: Creating values together" shows important events and exemplary technologies of Fraunhofer research. The 16 Fraunhofer Institutes from the new federal states will present their history and milestones as well as their future-oriented topics and projects at the International Congress Center Dresden. These Fraunhofer institutes helped to rebuild the machinery and plant engineering in Saxony and Thuringia, the optics in Jena, the production technology in Magdeburg, the microelectronics in Dresden and Berlin, the material research in Dresden and Halle, as well as the health research in Leipzig. Fraunhofer institutions also helped create a sustainable economy in Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. The exhibition is open to the public on Wednesday, May 31, 2017 from 10 am to 4 pm. At the opening ceremony on Monday, Dr. Eva-Maria Stange (Saxon Minister of State for Science and Art), Dresden's Mayor Dirk Hilbert, Dr. Michael Mertin (Chairman of the Board of Management of JENOPTIK AG) and Prof. Alexander Böker (Head of the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Polymer Research IAP) spoke, along with Prof. Neugebauer, about the importance of Fraunhofer for the development of the East German research landscape and economy.

Research awards and public event in the city center of Dresden

The Fraunhofer research awards ceremony will take place on Tuesday, May 30, 2017 under the motto "#real_digital: We connect worlds". Since 1978, the Fraunhofer-

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Gesellschaft has been awarding the "Joseph von Fraunhofer Prizes" annually for the outstanding scientific achievements of its researchers who solve application-oriented problems. This year, four awards of 50,000 euros each will be presented. The additional Fraunhofer award "Human-Centered Technology" is presented every two years for research and development work that contributes significantly to improving the quality of people's lives as well as preserving their day-to-day capability into old age. This award is endowed with 50,000 euros and is conferred in the presence of Prof. Johanna Wanka (Federal Minister for Education and Research) and Stanislaw Tillich (Minister President of the Free State of Saxony).

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On Tuesday, May 30, 2017 starting at 10 pm, Fraunhofer is also inviting the public to the big public event under the title "#real_digital: Experience research – How science changes the world". An interactive experience route in the inner city of Dresden informs visitors about the history of research as well as the current topics of networking and innovation against the historic backdrop of Dresden's old town. Facades of selected buildings will be presented by light and laser projections to create scene surfaces in which dramatic artists will present historical backgrounds to the city of Dresden, relevant research topics as well as highlights of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. "We have made tremendous efforts so that we can not only sell science but also create what is distinctive. We also want to show this with our anniversary events in Dresden," says Neugebauer, who is also looking to the future on this occasion. "In two years, we will celebrate 70 years of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft. We want to continue to turn original preliminary research into innovations, innovations into value creation and value creation ultimately into employment. Our main goal now is to promote system-relevant developments through project centers and to produce disruptive innovations (in other words, real breakthroughs). That's why we're developing research clusters as national centers for various research areas – such as for machine learning, programmable matter, public safety and autoimmune diseases. We want to push ahead with such topics in order to maintain scientific leadership as well as to help companies not only improve their processes but also open up new markets with completely new products."

Further information:

Visit the website of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft 2017 Annual Conference in Dresden, the exhibition, the award ceremony and the public event (information, pictures and videos):

> <http://s.fhg.de/jahrestagung2017>

Special issue of the accompanying Fraunhofer magazine "weiter.vorn" about the topic "25 years of Fraunhofer in the new federal states":

> www.fraunhofer.de/de/mediathek/publikationen/fraunhofer-magazin.html

> Also as an app:

- in the [App Store for iOS](#)

- in the [Google Play Store](#)

For the presentation of the Fraunhofer research awards, the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft is publishing a special issue of its press newsletter "Research News" on May 30, 2017.

> www.fraunhofer.de/en/press/research-news.html

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#real_digital: Experience research – how science changes the world.

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The interactive route „Experience research“ in Dresden.

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The **Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft** is the leading organization for applied research in Europe. Its research activities are conducted by 69 institutes and research units at locations throughout Germany. The Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft employs a staff of 24,500, who work with an annual research budget totaling 2.1 billion euros. Of this sum, 1.9 billion euros is generated through contract research. More than 70 percent of the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft's contract research revenue is derived from contracts with industry and from publicly financed research projects. International collaborations with excellent research partners and innovative companies around the world ensure direct access to regions of the greatest importance to present and future scientific progress and economic development.