



For Immediate Release

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Irvine Center for Applied Competitive Technologies (CACT) Awards \$4000 Grant to the Optics Institute of Southern California's

Irvine, CA, USA—29 June 2007— The Irvine CACT recently awarded a \$4000 grant to the Optics Institute of Southern California (OISC) to help fund its successful optics education outreach programs. The OISC actively promotes math, science, and engineering education to young people by demonstrating optics and related technologies. Through events such as their annual Optricks Days and various outreach programs at the University of California, Irvine, the OISC has reached more than 5000 students in just four years.

The OISC has been co-located with the Irvine CACT @ the Advanced Technology & Education Park (ATEP) for the past 18 months and has played a key role in establishing the Irvine CACT as a place for professional optics education and a focal point for optics educational outreach programs. The Irvine CACT and the OISC was designated a National Center for Photonics Education, a National Science Foundation Center of Excellence. The prestigious designation was awarded to thirteen centers across the U.S. that have committed to increasing the pool of well-trained technicians in optics and photonics by creating a secondary-to-postsecondary "pipeline" of highly qualified and strongly motivated students. The selected centers will receive grant funding for four years from the National Science Foundation to create one- and two-year postsecondary programs devoted specifically to lasers, optics, and photonics technology as well as high demand technologies that are enabled by optics and photonics, such as biomedicine, manufacturing, information technology, and engineering.

This award will be split into two parts, \$2000 being designated to the 2nd incarnation of the "Speed of Light Exhibit" which is scheduled to be open in the Summer of 2008 at the University of California, Irvine's Beall Center for Art + Technology. This exhibit will be an expansion of the 1st version which was in October 2004 at the Irvine Civic Center. The exhibit at the Beall Center will include a series of 'Hands-On Optics' interactive displays and demonstrations through which visitors can explore the world of optics. The OISC will partner with others, including the Optical Society of Southern California to bring this new exhibit to life over the next 12 months.

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