



LAWRENCE BERKELEY NATIONAL LABORATORY AND THE JOINT DARK ENERGY MISSION, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR FEDERAL POLICY RESEARCH, INVITE YOU TO ATTEND A

LUNCH BRIEFING: “Stalking Dark Energy – The Accelerating Universe”

Friday, March 17, 2006 – 12:00 noon
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room G-11

You are cordially invited to join Berkeley Lab Astrophysicist Saul Perlmutter for a discussion of the quest to answer one of the biggest scientific mysteries of our time – what is the elusive “dark energy” that is driving the accelerating expansion of our universe?

The Joint Dark Energy Mission (JDEM), a NASA and DOE collaboration, seeks to uncover the mystery of Dark Energy and the Accelerating Universe by unlocking the secrets of Supernova, some more than 10 billion light years away. Find out how the federal government is supporting this work, and what scientists are doing to answer these fundamental questions.

To attend, please reply (acceptance only, thank you) to Don Medley at drmedley@lbl.gov or by phone at 510-486-6863. The lunch briefing will take place Friday, March 17, 2006, at noon in G-11 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC. It will feature Saul Perlmutter, Member of the National Academy of Sciences, California Scientist of the Year in 2003, Professor of Physics at UC Berkeley, and Senior Scientist at Lawrence Berkeley Lab.

Since the 1930s, scientists have known galaxies are moving away from one another, and there has been an effort to study the rate of this expansion. Prior to Perlmutter’s efforts, astronomers expected the expansion of the universe was slowing, due to gravitational attraction of galaxies and other matter. However, Perlmutter and colleagues found the universe is actually expanding at an accelerating rate, as if a “negative pressure” was pushing everything apart. This negative pressure is apparently the predominant constituent of the universe, but nobody knows what it is.

The Department of Energy’s Office of Science and NASA are working together to address this fundamental mystery -- considered by many as the most critical question facing basic science today. The Joint Dark Energy Mission (JDEM) is a collaborative effort which will ultimately launch a satellite telescope with unmatched ability to observe supernova in the deepest regions of space and begin to uncover the mysteries of dark energy.

Science Magazine recognized the discovery and later confirmation of dark energy as the “Breakthrough of the Year” in both 1998 and 2003. Perlmutter and Berkeley Lab astrophysicist Michael Levi lead the SuperNova Acceleration Probe (SNAP) project, a 140-person nationwide collaboration proposing for the JDEM mission.