

**SPIE****Connecting minds.
Advancing light.**SPIE is the international society
for optics and photonics

SEARCH:

Enter Keywords

Entire Site

SEARCH

HOME | CONFERENCES + EXHIBITIONS | PUBLICATIONS | EDUCATION | MEMBERSHIP | INDUSTRY RESOURCES | CAREER CENTER | NEWSROOM

▼ Press Room

[Press Releases](#)[Event News and Photos](#)[SPIE in the News](#)[SPIE Member News](#)[Social Media: Connect](#)[RSS Collection](#)[For the Press](#)[History](#)[Leadership and Governance](#)[Fellows and Senior Members](#)[Awards Programs](#)[SPIE Giving](#)[Related Organizations](#)[Jobs at SPIE](#)[Public Policy](#)[PRINT PAGE](#) [EMAIL PAGE](#) [BOOKMARK](#)

'Sputnik moment' hailed by SPIE leaders, saying strong photonics industry will drive advances

26 January 2011

BELLINGHAM, Washington, USA -- SPIE leaders praised President Obama's call in last night's State of the Union address to a renewed commitment to scientific progress, and asserted that the photonics community is ready to lead the way.

"Strengthening America's science R&D output and education standards is vital for the economy. Light-based science and technology -- photonics -- drives many of the solutions to the challenges the President identified," said Robert Lieberman, chair of the Engineering, Science, and Technology Policy committee of SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics.

"SPIE fully supports this direction," Lieberman said. "The Society exists to assist industry and researchers in advancing technologies that enable biomedical, sustainable energy, optical telecommunications, security, and other applications that touch our lives on a daily basis and provide jobs at all levels. We are proud to help build the future by using the fascinating phenomena of optics to inspire and educate young people in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics."

Obama likened America's current situation to the early 1960s, when a commitment to research led to huge economic and scientific progress throughout the world.

"Half a century ago, when the Soviets beat us into space with the launch of a satellite called Sputnik, we had no idea how we'd beat them to the moon," Obama said. "The science wasn't there yet. NASA didn't even exist."

"But after investing in better research and education, we didn't just surpass the Soviets; we unleashed a wave of innovation that created new industries and millions of new jobs.

"This is our generation's Sputnik moment."

Making a distinction between "investing" and "spending," Obama called for dedicated investment in research and education as primary underpinnings to a strong economy.

Obama noted that progress will require collaboration between both political parties in Congress. "We will move forward together, or not at all," he said. "At stake right now is not who wins the next election At stake is whether new jobs and industries take root."

[SPIE](#), the international society for optics and photonics, was founded in 1955 to advance light-based technologies. Serving more than 180,000 constituents from 168 countries, the Society advances emerging technologies through interdisciplinary information exchange, continuing education, publications, patent precedent and career and professional growth. SPIE annually organizes and sponsors approximately 25 major technical forums, exhibitions and education programs in North America, Europe, Asia and the South Pacific, and supports scholarships, grants and other education programs around the world.

###

Media Contact:

Amy Nelson

Public Relations Manager

amy@spie.org

Tel: +1 360 685 5478



[About SPIE](#) | [Author Information](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [MySPIE.org](#) | [SPIEDigitalLibrary.org](#)

Copyright © SPIE
