

## American Heart Association Honors Brookhaven Lab as a ‘Fit-Friendly Company’ (图)

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April 17, 2007, UPTON, NY –The American Heart Association (AHA) has honored the U.S. Department of Energy’s Brookhaven National Laboratory as a “Fit-Friendly Company,” one of over 100 companies so recognized nationwide. According to AHA criteria, fit-friendly employers “champion the health of their employees and work to create a culture of physical activity in the workplace.”

Michael Thorn, Brookhaven’s Health Promotion Program Administrator, accepted a plaque that names Brookhaven Lab as a platinum-level recipient, the most prestigious award in the AHA program. Becoming a platinum recipient means that not only does an employer promote a wellness culture at the workplace, but also, positive outcomes from that culture have been achieved.

About one-quarter of “Fit-Friendly Companies” have received the platinum status, and Brookhaven Lab is the only company on Long Island to have that distinction.

“This award recognizes all the outstanding resources that promote good health at the Lab for employees, their families, and guests,” said Thorn. “We have a 5,300-acre site that has trails for hiking, running and biking. We have a gym, a pool, tennis courts, and numerous classes that promote fitness, from aerobics to yoga. Our annual Healthfest, which features activities, displays and workshops that promote good health, has expanded to a month-long program. We hold numerous workshops throughout the year on health-related issues, and we offer smoking cessation programs and WeightWatchers meetings on site.”

In addition, Thorn organizes a physical activity program for employees each spring, which offers incentives such as drawings for prizes for those who complete the program. For instance, this spring employees are invited to join “Step into Spring,” a six-week walking program in which participants will record their steps using a pedometer, while working toward walking 10,000 steps per day.

Thorn cited the 2005 “Spring into Color” program, which encouraged participants to eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day as well as exercise at least 30 minutes per day most days of the week, as particularly successful, leading to positive outcomes. Sixty-two percent of the 311 participants completed the program, and based on self-reported evaluation forms, 50 percent said they were more productive at work after completing the program, and many indicated positive health benefits, such as increased energy (78 percent), better control of weight (57 percent), and better sleep (41 percent). The vast majority of participants also indicated that they would continue the activities of the program on their own.

Currently, the Health Promotion Program is running a diabetes education program, which provides expert speakers and screening tests as well as other benefits to participants, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy.

The Health Promotion Program is part of Brookhaven Lab’s Occupational Medicine Clinic, which provides a free annual on-site physical for all employees, and health-risk assessments are available. Brookhaven’s cafeteria offers heart-healthy choices, and a registered dietitian runs an on-site monthly nutrition group. An employee assistance program offers individual counseling, support groups, workshops and lectures. In addition, the Laboratory has a fire-rescue group that provides 24/7 response to emergencies on site.

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