The Optical Fiber Communication Conference and Exposition (OFC) 2004 will take place Feb. 22-27 at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, Calif. This marks OFC’s 29th anniversary. The conference has evolved into the key forum for the presentation of the most significant optical communications applications and research available.

About 1,000 papers already have been submitted, and more than 500 exhibitors plan to be on hand to show devices, components, equipment, systems and network and carrier services.

Co-sponsored by OSA, IEEE Communications Society (IEEE/ComSoc) and the IEEE Lasers and Electro-Optics Society (IEEE/LEOS), OFC includes a commerce-driven exposition and leading edge, peer-reviewed educational programming, along with topical sessions and networking events.

The conference attracts an international audience, with nearly a third of attendees coming from outside the United States.

A scientific plenary session and awards ceremony will take place on Feb. 24.

John P. Stenbit of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) will address how and why the country is using dense wavelength division multiplexing (DWDM) to transform operations at the Pentagon. Stenbit, who is assistant secretary of defense of networks and information integration and chief information officer for DoD, will talk about where defense technology is headed. Yong-Kyung Lee, chief executive officer of Korea Telecom, will address the widespread availability of broadband access in Korea and the evolution of fiber in the loop to fiber to the home. William Cadogan, general partner of St. Paul Venture Capital, will discuss the specific financial challenges facing carriers around the world.

The plenary session also includes an award ceremony to honor significant achievements in the field. The John Tyndall Award and OSA, IEEE/LEOS and IEEE/ComSoc Fellowship Awards will be presented at this session.

Opportunities to learn

With 71 invited speakers, nine tutorials, nine workshops, more than 500 exhibiting companies and targeted conference programming, the conference offers multiple learning and networking opportunities. To assist attendees, OFC 2004 will be organized into nine topical categories, including fibers and propagation; amplifiers and lasers; fibers and waveguides; resonant devices and signal conditioning; optical switching and wavelength routing devices; optoelectronic devices; digital transmission systems; subsystems, network elements and analog systems; networks; and applications.

Attendees will be able to choose programming based on these topical areas. Under the category of optical switching and wavelength routing devices, for example, Ray Boncek of OFS Optics will...
lead a hands-on workshop on technology and economics for coarse wavelength multiplexing. Under the category of networks, Jeff Livas of Ciena will lead a workshop on the network tradeoffs between optical transparency and reduced regeneration cost.

In addition, OFC’s short courses cover a broad range of topic areas and a variety of educational levels, ranging from basic to advanced. This year industry experts will teach courses on topics such as packaging, tunable lasers, the optical Ethernet and optical amplifiers.

More than 50 short courses will be offered, including 15 new ones. Here’s a sample of some of the new topics that will be covered: fiber optics in wireless applications; an introduction to fiber sensors, principles, applications and prospects; intellectual property issues in high-technology business; an introduction to optical network design and planning; photonics packaging: critical component assembly processes; 40 Gbit/s transmission systems, design and design trade-offs; and optical and electronic polarization-mode dispersion mitigation.

Special programs
Chief technology officers, network architects, network designers and technologists will take a special interest in the Service Provider Summit. This full-day program includes panel discussions, a keynote presentation, business briefings, highlighted exhibits, an evening reception and networking events. Now in its second year, the summit focuses on the issues and technologies that drive telecommunications and highlights those aspects of the OFC conference that apply directly to service providers and carriers.

Ralph Ballart, vice president of broadband infrastructure and services at SBC Laboratories, will be the keynote speaker. Attendees will learn about how carriers must differentiate themselves in terms of service plans, technology, architecture and provisioning and how to fulfill customer needs. The speakers include Michael R. Jones of Broadwing Communications and Adam Joffe of SONY Online Entertainment.

OFC’s Market Watch is a three-day series focused on the business trends and emerging technologies that affect the future of the communications industry. Presentations and panel discussions feature speakers from government agencies, industry, research and the investment community. The topics and technologies discussed directly relate to the products and services featured in the OFC exhibit. The topics include broadband access as a tool in driving the telecom recovery and competitive issues of optical networking.

The OFC Career Center is available to all conference participants. Last year, it served more than 1,450 job seekers and 50 companies through workshops and other programs. In addition to on-site facilities, the center offers online resume database access, job postings and interview scheduling before, during and after the conference.

For more information on the conference, the OFC Web site (www.ofcconference.org) provides an easy, cost-saving way to register in advance.

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