

Pittcon[®] Returns to New Orleans in 2008

Presentations by Dr. Leroy Hood and Other Scientific Leaders Highlight the Technical Program for the Annual Scientific Conference and Exhibition

by Thomas M. Ricci

Program planning for Pittcon[®] 2008, which will once again be held in New Orleans, LA, March 2–7, is well under way. Historically, New Orleans has been a very successful venue for Pittcon. In the three years Pittcon was last held in New Orleans (2000–2002), annual attendance averaged over 25,000, and the Pittsburgh Conference organizing committee is anticipating another great turnout.

The remarkable rejuvenation of New Orleans continues, and the city is once again catering to a full meeting and convention schedule. Building upon the success of the American Library Association meeting in June 2006, which had 17,000 attendees, New Orleans has hosted a number of large conventions, including The American College of Cardiology (30,000 attendees), National Association of Realtors (23,000 attendees), and Healthcare Information & Management Systems Society (20,000 attendees). With \$60 million in renovations completed, the Morial Convention Center (*Figure 1*) is hosting more than 71 major conventions, trade shows, and meetings in 2007.

The New Orleans cultural and hospitality experience continues to thrive as well. At the annual Spring Pittcon Exhibitors Meeting, which was held in May in New Orleans, representatives from Pittcon-exhibiting companies were taken on a bus tour of the city and treated to dinner in small groups at many of the finest restaurants in the French Quarter.



Figure 1 Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans.

Pittcon 2008 President John Varine (*Figure 2*) was very pleased with the status of New Orleans as a host city for Pittcon. “The participating exhibitors received a first-hand look at the revitalization of the historic city, and left with a favorable impression of the Convention Center, French Quarter, hotels, restaurants, and support services.”

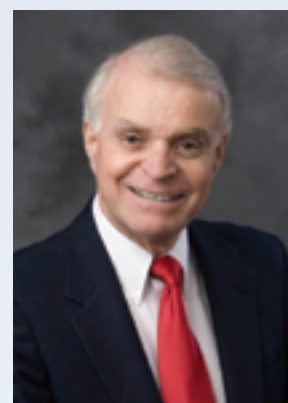


Figure 2 John A. Varine, Pittcon 2008 President.

“I was completely and pleasantly surprised at the state of New Orleans when I attended the Spring Exhibitors Meeting in May—my first trip back to New Orleans since Katrina devastated the city,” said Karl Hornberger, Trade Show Logistics Coordinator for **Agilent Technologies**. “Including the airport itself, the drive from the airport to New Orleans, the downtown area, surrounding downtown areas seen from our bus tour, both the host hotel for the Spring Exhibitors Meeting and our assigned Pittcon 2008 hotel, the French Quarter (where I believe I walked nearly every block), the convention center, and the several wonderful restaurants where I dined, I’d say that New Orleans is more than ready to host Pittcon 2008. New Orleans looks beautiful, and I’m looking forward to returning to one of my favorite cities in the U.S.”

As the host city, New Orleans will also receive the benefit of Pittcon’s philanthropic contributions. Each year, the nonprofit Pittsburgh Conference organization devotes nearly \$1 million in proceeds from Pittcon for the advancement of scientific education at all levels. A significant portion of the proceeds from Pittcon 2007 was allocated to the New Orleans public school system to fund science education programs at the high school level, and more funds will be allocated to New Orleans for 2008, primarily for the elementary/middle school level.



Figure 3 Dr. Leroy Hood, Plenary Lecturer.

Dr. Leroy Hood headlines a rich technical program

The Pittcon Technical Program continues to draw leading scientists involved in a variety of disciplines. In 2008, Dr. Leroy Hood (Figure 3), President and Co-Founder of the Insti-

tute for Systems Biology, and a driving force in bioanalytical technology, will deliver the Plenary Lecture, entitled "Systems Biology and Systems Medicine" (www.pittcon.org/technical/lecture.html). Dr. Hood's research has focused on fundamental biology (immunity, evolution, genomics) and bringing engineering to biology through the development of five instruments that constitute the technological foundation for modern molecular biology and genomics. The plenary lecture will focus on the contemporary state of systems biology and how systems medicine, together with pioneering changes in DNA sequencing and blood protein measurements (nanotechnology), and the development of powerful new computational and mathematical tools, will transform medicine over the next 5–20 years.

The Pittcon 2008 Technical Program will feature more than 2100 presentations, including invited symposia, contributed oral sessions, posters, workshops, and short courses (Figure 4). A diverse range of scientific topics will be covered, including bioanalysis, pharmaceutical science, nanotechnology, fuels, environmental, food, novel instrumental techniques, and a new symposium on art and archaeological applications. In recent years, applications and techniques in the pharmaceutical and life sciences have become more prominent in the Technical Program. At Pittcon 2007, nearly 50% of the technical presentations were geared toward advances in these disciplines.

ACS Division of Analytical Chemistry continues co-programming with Pittcon

Based on its success in 2007, the American Chemical Society Division of Analytical Chemistry (DAC) will again be co-programming at Pittcon 2008. The group has organized several invited symposia, contributed sessions, and poster sessions on a range of topics, including advances in ion-exchange chromatography, hydrophilic interaction chromatography, forensics, and interdisciplinary analytical chemistry.

The Pittcon community expands with networking sessions and scientific blogs

To further facilitate scientific discussion, Pittcon 2007 introduced networking sessions to enable conferees to brainstorm and exchange ideas on specific topics of interest. The inaugural sessions, which were held in an informal environment and moderated by an expert in the field, were very well



Figure 4 More than 100 Short Courses will be offered at Pittcon 2008.

received, and the topics will be expanded at Pittcon 2008 and several new forums added. The 2008 networking sessions will include:

- HPLC/MS Users' Forum
- New Faculty Initiating Competitive Research Programs
- ICP-MS and Chromatography for Metals Speciation
- Electronic Nose and New Technologies of Electronic Nose
- Use of LC/MS and New Technologies to Improve Efficiency in Pharmaceutical Development.

The Conferee Networking Sessions were extended after Pittcon 2007 with a series of interactive scientific blogs on its Web site (www.pittcon.org) to offer a mechanism for scientists to continue their discussions year-round (Figure 5).

Lab 2015: A gathering of emerging laboratory technologies

In continuing its efforts to expand the educational opportunities at the annual conference and exhibition, Pittcon 2008 will host a novel poster session and panel discussion called Lab 2015. The goal of this program is to explore promising new technology solutions that are one to three years away from widespread commercial adoption. It will also give emerging and early-stage companies and entrepreneurs the opportunity to present their novel technology, innovative



Figure 5 Pittcon has extended the Conferee Networking Sessions with scientific blogs on www.pittcon.org.



Figure 6 More than 1000 exhibitors are expected for Pittcon 2008.

scientific concept, or creative business model to potential end users, investors, and partners.

The latest products and technologies on display at the Pittcon 2008 Expo

Once again, the vendor exhibition will showcase the latest advancements in laboratory instrumentation, equipment, and services. More than 1000 vendors are expected

to exhibit and have their most recent products available for hands-on demonstrations and offer an opportunity to meet with their technical experts (*Figure 6*). The Expo always provides a valuable opportunity for buyers to compare and contrast equipment and have their technical questions answered one-on-one with the developers.

Brian J. McMullen, a Purchasing Agent with MPI Research, noted, "Meeting people I currently do business with face-to-face helps strengthen the buyer/supplier relationship. Seeing the other vendors I would never know if I did not attend, and seeing the new and upcoming products in the works, is also of great value. In 2007, I was surprised by the number of vendors that I had never heard of but could possibly utilize."

An international experience

Pittcon 2008 will surely attract a worldwide audience. With conferees and exhibitors representing more than 85 countries, Pittcon 2008 will offer a global scientific experience. For more information, visit www.pittcon.org.

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