

News from CAMD

It appears that the economic downturn has affected CAMD more than one would have ever predicted. We have been forced to cut our budget by 12 ½ percent. Since one half of the year has already elapsed, the true cut is closer to 25 percent. As most of you know, my safety budget is already bare-bones and simply cannot take any additional cuts. At the beginning of the fiscal year [July 1, 2008], my budget was cut by 29% from previous years. We all know from our personal lives that inflation has also crept up by as much as 12 percent.

From a machine perspective, scheduled upgrades to the Linac and a new cryostat for the Wiggler will all be postponed. Louisiana is rather unique in that research funds are made available from the Louisiana Board of Regents. I currently have a grant proposal in to upgrade CAMD's fixed radiation monitoring system. However, it has been suggested that the Board of regents will also be substantially cut, further reducing research dollars. We also look to the Board of Regents to fund major machine upgrades, since we are the only state supported facility of its kind in the nation. Such research dollars were made available from the interest on a \$800 million federal oil and gas revenue settlement which had been eliminated due to coastal erosion and land loss. This trust fund was dedicated to higher education.

Louisiana also has a law that prevents deficit spending – our Feds could certainly do with a similar law. There is a projected 300 million shortfall due to falling gas and oil prices for the next 6-7 months and up to a 1 billion shortfall for 2009-2010.

Most importantly, it is very difficult time for CAMD since we have been managed under an interim director for the past three and half years. That means, for all intents and purposes, the facility remains at status quo and major changes or upgrades are not a priority. Since there is now a hiring freeze, it is possible that the University may not be able to afford to replace or to put into place a new director for CAMD, although an offer for the CAMD director has been tendered but not yet accepted.

Thanks for letting me rant. May your programs remain intact and your jobs safe during these turbulent times.

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