

San Diego Science and Technology Council convenes high-tech leaders to discuss U.S. competitive strength

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SAN DIEGO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL CONVENES HIGH-TECH LEADERS TO DISCUSS U.S. COMPETITIVE STRENGTH

Despite eight consecutive years of economic expansion, could America lose its place in the next decade as the world's preeminent innovator?

This will be a major topic of discussion when local, regional and national leaders of the high technology industry gather Tuesday, April 6 in San Diego at the "Globalization of Innovation" conference sponsored by the San Diego Science and Technology Council (SDSTC). The event will be held at 5 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency La Jolla, 3777 La Jolla Village Drive.

"This is an important and timely event for leaders of San Diego's high-tech community to engage their national counterparts on how we maintain our innovation capability," says Edward Furtek, executive director of SDSTC and associate vice chancellor of science, technology and policy at the University of California, San Diego.

The conference will focus on a recent in-depth report by the Council on Competitiveness, a national non-partisan forum of chief executives from the business, university and labor communities working to sustain U.S. economic leadership which concludes that at a time when innovation is becoming even more fundamental to the prosperity of advanced economies, the U.S. commitment to innovation has weakened.

Headlining the list of speakers at the conference are:

William Hambrecht, chair of the Council on Competitiveness, and president of W.R. Hambrecht & Co., a leading venture capital firm in Silicon Valley.

Ben Shapiro, executive vice president for Worldwide Basic Research of Merck & Co., Inc.

Maurice Holmes, director of the Center for Innovation and Product Development at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Speakers will address the findings of the Council on Competitiveness report, which says America's growing "complacency" to innovation is evidenced by such signs as: stagnant investment in basic research, which is driven by cutbacks at the federal level; a dwindling talent pool of scientists and engineers, coupled with a lack of national investment and commitment to K-12 education; and failure to improve intellectual property protection in global markets.

In addition, possible solutions will be discussed.

Says the council: "A new national innovation strategy supported by a broad array of public and private investments and policy choices is needed now to renew the foundation for long-term U.S. competitiveness and prosperity. The unique set of conditions that propelled the United States to world leadership may not be sufficient to keep us there."

In addition to providing a national perspective, Furtek says the conference "will broaden understanding and support for regional efforts to promote the innovation capability of San Diego's high-tech clusters."

The gathering is expected to be attended by local and regional high-technology representatives from the private sector (telecommunications, computer software, multimedia, biotechnology and bioinformatics) and the public sector (universities, corporate economic development and regional technology alliances).

The San Diego Science and Technology Council is a network of San Diego's leading science and technology organizations. Convened by the University of California, San Diego, the SDSTC's mission is to enhance the region's innovation capability and global competitiveness. The conference is part of SDSTC's 1999 Inquiry and Innovation Speaker Series.

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