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National Energy Technology Laboratory Scientists Win Award

The Mid-Atlantic Region of the Federal Laboratory Consortium this year presented the Regional Excellence in Technology Transfer Award to Mr. Jimmy D. Thornton, Co-Project Leader, Co-Inventor, Research Group Leader, Sensors and Controls Development, Energy System Dynamics Division, Office of Science and Technology Analysis (OSTA), National Energy Technology Laboratory for work on “Combustion Control and Diagnostics Sensor (CCADS) for Gas Turbines.” Supporting team members include: Mr. Jimmy Thornton, Co-Project Leader, Research Group Leader, Sensors and Controls Development, Dr. Benjamin Chorpeneing, Co-Project Leader, senior R&D Staff Member, Mr. Douglas Straub, Co-Project Leader, Research Group Leader, Combustion Dynamics, Mr. E. David Huckaby, Co-Project Leader, Senior R&D Staff Member, Dr. George Richards, Focus Area Leader, Energy Systems Dynamics Focus Area, and Mr. Kelly Benson of the Woodward Industrial Controls Corporation.

All combustion processes require a fuel and an oxidizer, usually air. Balance between the fuel and oxidant is critical to ensure that the process is clean and efficient. To maximize efficiency and minimize emissions, many advanced gas turbine systems – the kind that will increasingly be used to generate electricity – employ “lean-premix combustion” techniques. It is essential to balance the mixture of air-to-fuel performed continually to maintain optimum performance. This continual balancing requires sensors in the combustor to provide key feedback on combustor performance. This team invented and perfected just such a sensor, enabling the advancement of gas turbine technology.

One of the most coveted awards in the field of technology transfer, the FLC awards for Excellence in Technology Transfer recognize laboratory employees who have accomplished outstanding work in the process of transferring Federally-developed technology to the marketplace. The award was made on September 15 at the region’s annual meeting.

The Federal Laboratory Consortium is comprised of the technology transfer offices of all of the Federal laboratories throughout the country while its Mid-Atlantic Region focuses on the 70 Federal laboratories in DC, DE, MD, PA, VA and WV.