

From Fermilab Today: ILC Citizens' Task Force forges ahead

With funding for ILC R&D cut this year, and the possible start of construction postponed, the ILC Citizens' Task Force could have turned their backs on the proposed project.

They didn't.

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Charged to provide advice and guidance to Fermilab on all public aspects of ILC planning and design, the Citizens' Task Force has held monthly meetings at Fermilab for more than a year. At a Task Force meeting Tuesday, the 25 members from neighboring subdivisions, political boards and community organizations affirmed their commitment to finishing their task. They believe their recommendations, made from the public's point of view, have value for ILC decision-making, no matter when and where the world builds the proposed accelerator.

The group first met in January 2007. They've met once a month with scientists, engineers and other experts to learn about the ILC and community-related aspects of siting it near Fermilab. Their early and substantive involvement represents a model for public participation in large science projects.

Some task force members expressed interest in emphasizing the need for U.S. research in basic science. Others noted that an erratic science budget fosters a lack of trust among neighbors, creating even larger challenges for siting the ILC or other large projects in the future.

Task force member Terri Voitik, of Aurora, said support for U.S. science needs to come not just from the Task Force, but from the community. "We need to step up as a community and make ourselves heard," she said.

The task force plans to finish its report in early May.

-- Tona Kunz



ILC Citizens' Task Force members Vicki Danklefsen, of Geneva, and Eric Schwarze, of Warrenville, participate in a group meeting Jan. 22. The Task Force members will submit recommendations in May.