

Westfielder Arun Netravali of Lucent Receives Nation's Top Technology Award

WASHINGTON D. C. — President George W. Bush announced last Thursday the selection of Arun Netravali of Westfield, former President of Lucent Technologies' Bell Labs and currently chief scientist at



Arun Netravali

Lucent, as one of this year's five recipients of the U.S. National Medal of Technology. A resident of Westfield for more than two decades, Mr. Netravali was cited for his "pioneering contributions that transformed TV from analog to digital, enabling numerous integrated circuits, systems and services in broadcast TV, CATV, DBS, HDTV and multimedia over the Internet, and for technical expertise and leadership, which have kept Bell Labs at the forefront in communications technology."

"It's really a great honor for a number of reasons," Mr. Netravali told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* Monday, expressing his appreciation that the United States would choose an Indian-born scientist to receive its highest honor in technology achievement.

He noted it was the first time someone in his field, picture processing, was selected to receive the National Medal of Technology, adding that the occasion also represented "a terrific honor for Bell Labs."

Mr. Netravali, who aspired to be an engineer since childhood and fulfilled a dream by working for Bell Labs, paid tribute to his colleagues for their own contributions and their friendship.

"One of the wonderful things about Bell Labs is I had so many different role models," he remarked. "It's a very inspiring place where if you wanted to know about any subject, there's a world class expert right next door," willing to share his or her knowledge.

He and his wife, Chitra, a pediatrician for the City of Newark, have two children. Daughter Ilka is a junior at Princeton University, where she is pursuing a double major in pre-med and electrical engineering. Mr. Netravali's son, Ravi, is a sixth-grade student at Edison Intermediate School in Westfield.

The National Medal of Technology recognizes men and women who embody the spirit of American inno-

vation and have advanced the nation's global competitiveness.

The medal recognizes groundbreaking contributions that help commercialize technologies, create jobs, improve productivity and stimulate the nation's growth and development.

Established by Congress in 1980 and administered by the Department of Commerce, it is the nation's highest honor for achievement in technology. The President will present the medals at a ceremony later this year at the White House.

"This honor highlights what we at Lucent have known for many years, that Arun Netravali is a brilliant scientist," commented Lucent Chief Executive Officer Patricia Russo.

"His contributions are playing a significant role in today's digital video revolution. He also piloted Bell Labs — a recipient of the National Medal of Technology in 1985 — through a critical period in its long and distinguished history.

"As a result, the world continues to depend on Bell Labs today as a leading source of new communications technologies and a veritable cornucopia of scientific breakthroughs," she added.

The compression technology Mr. Netravali developed is essential to digital video systems used in cable and network television, high-definition television (HDTV), video telephones and videoconferencing systems.

In addition, his work is the basis for systems that use streaming video over the Internet, websites that store compressed video, and multimedia computers.

Cable television set-top boxes, direct broadcast satellite receivers and HDTV sets that use the MPEG and HDTV standards rely on Mr. Netravali's compression algorithms, which also made communication services such as video conferencing and Internet streaming video an economic reality.

Mr. Netravali led the development of HDTV technology at Bell Labs in the 1990s, and a video encoder based on his work is today used by more than 150 television stations for their HDTV broadcasts.

In 1997, he received an Engineering Emmy Award from the Academy

of Television Arts and Sciences for his work on HDTV.

Mr. Netravali served as President of Bell Labs, Lucent Technologies' research and development division, from 1999 to 2001. Under his leadership, Lucent dramatically increased the speed with which it was able to move innovations from lab to market.

As Lucent's chief scientist, he now works with the academic and investment communities to identify important new networking technologies and advises Lucent's senior management on technical and customer issues.

Mr. Netravali is a member of Tau Beta Phi and Sigma Xi; a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and a member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering.

For his scientific achievements, he has received numerous awards, in-

cluding the Alexander Graham Bell Medal (1991); the Computers and Communications Prize (1997, NEC, Japan); the Frederik Philips Award from the IEEE (2000); the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASCOM) Medal in India (2000), and the Kilby Medal from the IEEE (2001).

In 2001, he also received the Padma Bhushan Award from the Indian government, the nation's third-highest civilian honor.

He has authored more than 170 technical papers and co-authored three books, including "Digital Picture Representation and Compression," "Visual Communications Systems" and "Digital Video: An Introduction to MPEG-2."

He holds more than 70 patents in the areas of computer networks, human interfaces to machines, picture processing and digital video and television.

Mr. Netravali was an adjunct professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and has taught graduate courses at City College in New York, Columbia University and Rutgers University.

He has served on the editorial board of the IEEE and is currently an editor of several journals. Mr. Netravali additionally is a board member with a number of organizations.

He received his undergraduate degree from the Indian Institute of Technology in Mumbai, India, and master's and doctorate degrees from Rice University in Houston, Tex., all in electrical engineering.

Mr. Netravali holds an honorary doctorate from the Ecole Polytechnique Federale in Lausanne, Switzerland.

In addition to the nine U.S. Medals of Science laureates affiliated with Bell Labs, Mr. Netravali joins seven previous Bell Labs scientists and engineers as U.S. Medal of Technology laureates.

Referring to the seven previous Bell Labs engineers and scientists who received the award, Mr. Netravali said his selection for the medal was "a great tradition to be following."

In 1985, Bell Labs as an organization was honored with the medal for its numerous contributions to modern communications systems. It was the first institution recognized with this honor.

Lucent Technologies, headquartered in Murray Hill, designs and delivers networks for the world's largest communications service providers. For more information on Lucent, please visit <http://www.lucent.com>.



DIGGING IN...Construction began on Saturday, May 11, on the site designated for the September 11th Memorial Park on the corner of East Broad Street and North Avenue in Westfield. Under the direction of Craig Stock, landscape designer for the project, volunteers from the Jaycees and the Friends of Dean Eberling began initial excavation of the area that will house a glass and granite memorial honoring the victims of the September 11th tragedy.

Clerk's Office Raises Revenue, Tax Burden Offset

AREA — The Union County Clerk's Office saw a \$1 million increase in the County's portion of revenues over the first four months of 2002, County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi said.

From January through April, the office received \$2.3 million in fees, an 83 percent revenue increase and a 30 percent increase in volume for land documents over the first four months of 2001.

The dramatic increase in revenue came primarily from a significant increase in the volume of recordation of land records as well as passports and photo identification cards, Rajoppi said. This is due to the boom-

ing real estate market, particularly the high activity in mortgage refinancing. A state-mandated fee increase, which became effective in February, also boosted revenues.

"Union County is an attractive and affordable place in which to live, work and raise a family," Rajoppi said. "Our strategic location and high quality of life continue to feed the high demand for real estate. We expect the demand to continue for the balance of 2002."

In addition to the clerk office at the Courthouse in Elizabeth, the Westfield Annex is open on Tuesday and Thursday evenings until 7:30 p.m.

ETown Water Achieves ISO 9001

WESTFIELD — Elizabethtown Water Company's Plant Operations Group has received ISO 9001 certification, making it the first water company in the United States to achieve the international distinction. Achieving the ISO 9001 standard for quality marks the completion of the company's first step toward distinguishing itself as a Best in Class water utility.

"This phenomenal achievement builds on the great work done by Elizabethtown Water Company for decades," said Andrew Chapman, president of Elizabethtown. "With superior efforts of the current team and help from our parent, Thames Water, we turned the great work into an international achievement."

ISO is the International Organization for Standardization, a federation of 132 national standards bodies based in Geneva, Switzerland, that has created a series of quality management systems standards.

Dennis L. Ciemniecki, Elizabethtown's Vice President, says that for Elizabethtown's residential customers, the ISO 9001 achievement is another independent measure of the quality management process behind the treatment of the water they receive. The process eventually will be moved throughout the entire organization. "It's very aggressive, but achievable," says Mr. Ciemniecki. "And in the end, it will improve the way we manage and deliver our service."

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