



## ORNL and Jackson State Sign Mentor-Protégé Agreement



*Signing the mentor-protégé agreement between ORNL and Jackson State University are (from left) Robert Brown, deputy manager, DOE Oak Ridge Operations; Ronald Mason, president, Jackson State University; and Thom Mason, ORNL director. At right is Will Minter, director of the ORNL Small Business Programs Office.*

A joint initiative has been launched by Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and Jackson State University to help expand the university's research programs and promote research collaboration at both institutions.

"Matching the talents of an acclaimed university with the resources of a world-class national lab emphasizes the importance of training the next generation of scientists," said William Valdez, director of Workforce Development for the Department of Energy's (DOE's) Office of Science.

ORNL Director Thom Mason said the partnership gives the lab opportunities to gain access to new expertise, extend research capabilities, and identify

exceptional candidates for positions at ORNL. "We look forward to making our capabilities available to Jackson State faculty and students and to the contributions that they will make to our missions and programs," he said.

The agreement will provide ORNL opportunities for joint initiatives in fields where Jackson State's capabilities are nationally known, such as chemistry, environmental science, and human health. "Our students and faculty will benefit from experience with ORNL's state-of-the-art research facilities, modern laboratory equipment, and expert science staff," said Ronald Mason Jr., Jackson State president.

The Mentor-Protégé Program is part of a DOE initiative to encourage and help small businesses perform contracts and subcontracts for ORNL. In addition to minority educational institutions, program participants include small disadvantaged businesses and those owned by women or service-disabled veterans. Jackson State already works with ORNL on emergency operations management and disaster response systems. The university enrolls some 8,000 students and is a partner in ORNL's Southeast Region Research Initiative.