Zacharia named ORNL deputy director for science and technology and UT-Battelle senior vice president for S&T

OAK RIDGE, Tenn., March 16, 2009—Thomas Zacharia, Oak Ridge National Laboratory's (ORNL's) associate director for computing and computational sciences, has been named ORNL deputy laboratory director for science and technology (S&T) and UT-Battelle senior vice president for S&T, responsible for coordinating ORNL's major research and development (R&D) programs.

As deputy lab director, Zacharia will oversee one of the nation's largest R&D programs, with annual expenditures in excess of $1.3 billion in materials and physical sciences, energy and engineering sciences, computational sciences, life and environmental sciences, neutron sciences and national security. His appointment becomes effective April 1.

"Thomas has done a remarkable job of building ORNL's computational program into one of the world's best," said ORNL Director Thom Mason. Under Zacharia's leadership, in November 2008 "Jaguar," a Cray XT supercomputer at ORNL's computing complex, became the world's fastest supercomputer for open science. Simulations on Jaguar help the nation's scientists explore grand challenges in science and engineering, such as developing new energy solutions and better understanding climate change.

Zacharia's appointment is part of a strategic reorganization of resources as the national lab positions itself to make the most of an historic investment of funds for transformational scientific research by the President and Congress. The recently enacted fiscal year 2009 Omnibus Bill and the Stimulus package together contain more than $2.3 billion in increased spending for U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science programs. ORNL, managed by UT-Battelle for DOE, is poised to hire 1,000 employees in the next two years, according to Mason.

ORNL's Jeff Nichols will assume the position of interim associate laboratory director for computing and computational sciences while an international search is conducted for Zacharia's replacement. Nichols currently serves as the deputy associate laboratory director of ORNL's Computing and Computational Sciences Directorate, where he leads efforts to build, install and deploy next-generation supercomputers for DOE, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Defense.

Previously Nichols led the Computer Science and Mathematics Division at ORNL and the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory at DOE's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, where high priority was given to the development, deployment and use of scalable computational science community codes to solve grand-challenge problems crucial to the nation.—*by Dawn Levy*