

## message from the director



Spring is upon us and with it another Earth Day and our Environmental Colloquium. I hope all of you get to enjoy David Suzuki's lecture on April 20, and the other earth week events. Please take advantage of the spring weather to take on your own "My 20" challenge, and try to reduce your environmental and energy footprint by 20%. Walk or ride a bike on some short trips around town, turn off the lights and TV and enjoy the lengthening daylight on a warm evening. Plant a vegetable garden so this summer you can enjoy the most local food you can get!

I am pleased to report that Penn State continues to excel in research funding for energy and the environmental sciences. NSF ranks our environmental programs in the top 12 universities in the country, and the combined breath and depth of our portfolio is unequalled nationwide. The Department of Energy ranked Penn State 9th nationally in energy research, and our \$63 million in energy research funding in FY06-07 blossomed to \$87M in funding in FY07-08.

I continue to be amazed and humbled at the extraordinary effort that portfolio represents. With close to 800 faculty and staff subscribing to our bi-weekly electronic newsletter, and hundreds of graduate and undergraduate students actively engaged, we represent one of the largest interdisciplinary research teams in the world. And we are having impact, in new discoveries and innovation, in economic and community development, and in improved environmental impact for both people and our planet.

Despite this success, challenges remain. This winter has been one of truly chilly news for the broader economy, with reduced funding from many of our industrial partners and foundations. At PSIEE we have responded by tightening our belts, making the hard choices and finding new efficiencies so we can emerge from this difficult time stronger than ever. We have been very pleased at the continuing support of the faculty and administration, who collectively have committed to continue making strategic investments of their time, money, and ideas in our energy and environment portfolio. And as always, we are grateful to the students and staff that together provide us with the motivation and the capability to continue this important work.

I want to close with a special word of thanks to Brian Dempsey, who served PSIEE for many years as associate director, and who this year was drawn back to his teaching and research in Civil and Environmental Engineering, where his exceptional passion is making tremendous impact. Brian continues to mentor both me and the other new directors in many critical ways, and continue building the interdisciplinary networks for which Penn State is renowned. Thank you Brian! ■

*Tom Richard*