Physics Colloquium - Colorado State University
4:00 PM, Monday; March 10, 2014; Refreshments at 3:45 PM
120 Engineering (Hammond Auditorium)

Physics, Entrepreneurship, and a Lab to Get It All Going

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ABSTRACT:

Physicists have a lot to offer in terms of the 'necessary-conditions' for successful innovation and entrepreneurship: we understand the fundamental basis of a wide range of technologies and are capable of creating sophisticated models to explore new applications. So what does it take to make the leap into careers devoted to connecting physics and innovation? Part of the answer might be access to a physical environment whose versatility complements our fundamental training: we have created an instance of this called the Innovation Hyperlab next to Gateway High School in Aurora. Here high school students work with college students, teachers, professors, and industry partners to boldly explore new applications of physics and technology. We are also creating curriculum for many levels of "on demand" learning so that when a project requires knowing about a technology and how it connects physics to an application, there is a way to quickly come up to speed. All of this, we hope, lays a foundation for encouraging students to think about careers as innovators, either on their own as entrepreneurs or on the job working for industrial employers. I'll comment also on some of the additional non-technical elements that make innovation more likely to succeed, elements associated with the realities of making and sustaining a viable business. A workshop is being held at the American Center for Physics on June 4-6 to encourage university faculty to consider programs that encourage students to become physicist innovators and entrepreneurs.