PRESS RELEASE

Dr. Constantin Häfner named new Fraunhofer ILT director

Effective November 2019, renowned laser physicist Dr. Constantin Häfner will be taking on the Directorship of the Fraunhofer Institute for Laser Technology ILT in Aachen. He is currently Program Director for Advanced Photon Technologies at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, where he has led the development of the world's most powerful laser systems.

The Fraunhofer Institute for Laser Technology ILT is one of the world's leading centers for contract research in laser development and applications, with more than 540 employees and facilities covering a floor space of more than 19,500 m². The institute specializes in the development of advanced laser beam sources and their applications in manufacturing, medicine and environmental science, and the development of laser test and measurement systems.

Lasers and other optical devices are ubiquitous in today's world. Fraunhofer ILT has developed many of the key technologies in use in industry today, and by sharing its know-how, has enabled many of its customers to become market leaders. Award-winning technology from Aachen can be found in factories that build lightweight cars, on board environmental satellites, and in hospitals, where it allows rapid analysis of cancer cells.

With its research into digital photonic production, new light and laser sources, quantum technology and electric mobility, Fraunhofer ILT will continue to set new standards in the development of innovative solutions for industry and research.

Constantin Häfner: From California to Aachen

Beginning in November 2019, Dr. Constantin Häfner will assume responsibility as the director of Fraunhofer ILT. After graduating from the University of Konstanz with a degree in physics, he obtained a Ph.D. in laser physics from the University of Heidelberg. In 2004, Häfner moved to the United States, first to the Nevada Terawatt Facility, University of Nevada, Reno, and subsequently, in 2006, to the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, California. As Program Director for Advanced Photon Technologies, he headed up the development of the world's most powerful laser systems and conducted R&D into pioneering laser technologies.

What Dr. Häfner especially appreciates about Aachen is the close link between academic and applied research, as practiced by Fraunhofer: "By drawing together top-

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class research and industrial applications, and cultivating a direct and open dialog with its customers, Fraunhofer ILT brings innovative and competitive solutions faster to the market. These excellent results are a product of the expertise and passion of the institute's employees. I'm delighted to have the opportunity to perpetuate and build on this culture."

For Häfner, research and technology transfer is a question of culture, not merely a process: "Fraunhofer ILT sets international standards in training of future laser scientists and engineers for both industry and the research community. It is important to me that we integrate and promote people of different genders, origins and cultures with their many different points of view. Diversity is a source of new ideas and approaches and enhances our competitiveness significantly."

Appointment to RWTH Aachen University

In addition to his role as institute director, Dr. Häfner will also hold the associated Chair for Laser Technology LLT at RWTH Aachen University. RWTH Aachen University ranks as one of the eleven universities of excellence in Germany. As such, it has developed into an integrated, interdisciplinary university for science and technology, with a focus on the convergence of knowledge, methods and research findings. The university aims to create a unique national and international environment for education, research and knowledge transfer that transcends disciplinary and organizational boundaries.

As university lecturer and ILT director, Dr. Häfner will also be involved in the many-faceted R&D activities at RWTH Aachen University. These include interdisciplinary research projects conducted by 16 different RWTH institutes as part of the Research Center for Digital Photonic Production RCDPP and joint research with industry in the Research Campus Digital Photonic Production DPP.

The previous chairholder and Fraunhofer ILT director Prof. Reinhart Poprawe was honored for his life's work with an honorary symposium "Digital Photonic Production and Industrie 4.0 and what it means for education and research" on June 23, which was attended by high-ranking representatives of science and industry and many friends and companions. Prof. Poprawe is taking retirement after handing over to his successor.

Image 1:
In November 2019, the renowned laser physicist Dr. Constantin Häfner is to take over as director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Laser Technology ILT in Aachen, Germany.
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Image 2:
With more than 540 employees, Fraunhofer ILT in Aachen, Germany, is worldwide one of the most important contract research institutes in laser development and applications.
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